7.2.

Hugh Cecil Earl of Lonsdale.

260 Records of the Chase and Memoirs of celebrated Sportsmen; illustrating some of the usages of olden times, and comparing them with prevailing customs. Together with an introduction to most of the fashionable Hunting Countries, and Comments. By **Cecil** (Cornelius Tongue). London. 1854.

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231
Hon. Cecil

B Herring

E. Hacker

A Sportsman of the Present Time

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PREFACE.

THE great popularity which the Chase has acquired renders it a subject of vast interest to a large body of the community; and I have endeavoured to embody in these pages such incidents in reference to its origin, progress, and present state, as, I humbly conceive, may at once gratify curiosity and afford amusement.

An account of the habits of the crafty fox, and the origin of the sagacious, faithful hound, will, I trust, be perused with interest.

The memoirs of some of the most celebrated sportsmen, whose talent has added grace to the "Noble Science," will show the zeal with which our forefathers entered into the sport; and the description of some of the most fashionable hunting countries may serve to entertain the sportsman on a frosty day, or beguile the time when he makes the steam-engine his covert hack; while

they will impart to the stranger some idea of the country in which he is about to seek his sylvan pastime.

Without attempting to enter into the mystic details of kennel management, or the intricate duties of the huntsman in the field, we have thrown out a few hints which may perhaps prove useful to the uninitiated.

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RECORDS OF THE CHASE.

CHAPTER I.

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WHATEVER period we select to investigate the manners, customs, and occupations of the human race, we find that hunting has formed a prominent and interesting portion of their engagements. There are two conspicuous causes from which the origin of the chase may be traced — one, for the purpose of procuring food; the other, that of destroying ferocious or noxious beasts. The fox is the only one remaining in Great Britain originally

included in the latter category; a classification in which it is scarcely consistent to retain him, now that the pursuit of that animal has become one of our principal and most popular national amusements. Hunting is not confined to the civilised portion of mankind; it still continues to be the engagement of the uncultivated savage, as a means of obtaining sustenance. It is a fact worthy of remark, which we derive from ancient history, that as the prosperity of any country has increased, gymnastic exercises and sporting enterprises have flourished; and whenever they were abandoned, luxury, idleness, and debauchery obtained a footing. As evidence of the great estimation in which he held field sports, Alexander the Great commanded the renowned Aristotle to write a treatise on the subject, for which he was compensated with a large sum of money from the treasury. During the reign of the Emperor Severus, who built the Picts Wall in England, Appianus wrote four books on hunting. Grotius studied the same subject, more intimately connected with the sport of coursing. Nemesianus, likewise, wrote some poems on hunting, and many other classic authors devoted their talents and labours to a similar purpose. That our manly sports have been considered worthy the pens of the most able writers of their respective ages, cannot be refuted; and their appreciations

must be received as evidence of the importance with which these sports were regarded.

The manner of conducting field sports has varied very considerably at different periods, not only with reference to the customs which have been observed in the pursuit of animals of the same kind, but, taking into account the great numbers which in the feudal ages infested our wilds and forests, and the essential differences in the habits of those creatures, it was evidently imperative to approach and pursue them with various stratagems. The sturdy bristly boar and ferocious wolf could not be secured on the same terms as the fleet and bounding deer, or the more cautious, timid hare. Hunting was an expression evidently not confined to the pursuit of any particular animals; every creature, from the active squirrel to the sullen wild boar, was, if found in the woods, considered a suitable subject for exercising the talent and feeding the passion—*amor venandi*—of the hunter. The term hunting in those days took a wide range; for it was used to signify the pursuit and destruction, by any means that could be devised, of any of the wild natives of the woods calculated for food, or of the ferocious ones whose presence was dangerous and annoying. But the word in its present acceptation is confined to chasing animals with hounds. Without being able to describe from personal experience the cus-

toms connected with "La Chasse" in France, as pursued at the present time, the accounts with which we are favoured by various friends, both orally and in print, savour vastly of those which we read of in the earliest ages. Whether it be the boar, the stag, or the wolf, a few hounds only are cast off in search; the body of the pack, as we should call it, being kept in reserve till the game is fairly roused from his resting-place. This is no doubt a necessary proceeding with hounds which are kept for the purpose of hunting various animals, and especially in strong woods difficult of access to man and horse. Nevertheless these practices, no doubt, might be amended, to what extent I will not presume to state; but, if hounds were kept to the chase of one kind of animal only, properly attended by skilful whippers-in, there is no doubt they would find their game, whether stag, boar, or wolf, with as much certainty as our hounds do the fox; and they would unquestionably be steadier in chase than they are under the present management. The French custom of destroying the animal with spears, guns, or swords, whenever opportunity offers, while the hounds are in pursuit, is precisely similar to that of the ancients, excepting that before the use of fire-arms, spears, swords, or bows and arrows were the weapons of destruction.

Fox-hunting is an amusement almost exclu-

sively confined to this nation. To identify the precise period when it was first conducted according to the prevailing system of the present century, would be an impossibility, and indeed, it is quite evident that it has undergone many gradations and changes. We have authentic testimony that William the Conqueror brought with him to these shores an inordinate appetite for the chase, and the laws which he established in order to pursue his pleasure, by dispossessing the poor peasants of their abodes in the New Forest, to render that wide tract of land an arena for royal amusement, were such as a tyrant ruler only would have attempted; but hunting foxes formed no part of his diversion. This regal prerogative, although modified, existed during a period of nearly 800 years; for it was only during the enlightened reign of our amiable and beloved Queen, that the rights and privileges of the forest were abandoned by the Crown. The death of the Conqueror's successor, William Rufus, by the discharge of an arrow levelled at a stag in the aforesaid forest, is a circumstance so universally known that it would not be worthy of remark except for the purpose of comparing the deer-stalking of the present times with the kind of hunting, as it was termed, when those primitive weapons the bow and arrow were made use of. The invention of fire-arms, and the numerous improvements that have been intro-

duced, render the rifle in practised hands a most unerring implement; armed with which, the amusement of deer-stalking still maintains its supremacy with Royalty.

The early annals of the chase are imperfect in detail, but still we have quite sufficient authority for the conviction that it was pretty generally followed as an amusement by sovereigns and the nobles of England from the reign of the Conqueror to the present time. As feudal usages passed away, as the sunshine of civilisation gained ascendency, as landed property became more generally diffused and independence assumed a footing, hunting, which was previously enjoyed exclusively by royalty, the nobility and their retainers, gradually became an amusement for all classes.

I have met with a very old and curious treatise on hunting, in the possession of a gentleman of ancient family, for many years residing in Herefordshire, and a true lover of sporting. The book, although the leaves are of vellum, encased in oak boards, by the ravages of time is slightly mutilated — that is, the title-page is wanting; but I have no doubt it is the production of Edmund de Langley, one of the sons of Edward the Third, Earl of Cambridge and afterwards Duke of York. The writing is well executed, and it may no doubt be received as one of the best

authorities descriptive of the chase as it was followed during the period when the book was composed. It would be difficult to assign a precise date to this work; it is sufficient to state that it must have been written about the close of the fourteenth century, prior to the invention of the art of printing. Many of the customs relative to the treatment of hounds and the observances in the field, which are mentioned in the work, continue in practice. The numerous abbreviations, together with curiously formed characters, render it difficult to decipher, especially as several of the terms made use of are nearly obsolete; but, as I feel assured a few extracts from such a quaint and scarce work will be received with interest by the lovers of research into ancient customs, I make a selection of the most remarkable passages, somewhat modernized, to render it more easy of perusal. The dedication commences thus:—

"Unto the wise, excellent, and Christian Prince, Henry the Fourth, by the aforesaid grace King of England and of France, Prince of Wales, Duke of Teyne, of Lancaster, and of Cornwall, and Earl of Chester, I your own in every humble wise. I attempt to make a simple book, which I recommend and submit to your noble and wise correction. The which book, if it like to your aforesaid lordship, shall be called and named the Maister of Game, and for

this cause. For the matters that this book treateth of are every season of the year most durable, and to my thinking to every gentle heart the most honest and most disportful of all games, that is to say hunting. For if it be so that hawking with gentle hawks for the heron, be noble and commendable; it lasteth but seldom, at the most not passing half a year. And if men find game enough from May to Lammass to hawk at, then might they not find hawks to hawk with. But of hunting there is no season of all the year that game may not be in every good country right well found, and eke hounds to enchase it. And since this book shall be all of hunting, which is so noble a game, and eke lasting through all the year to divers beasts, me thinketh that I may well call it Maister of Game."

Enumerating the different beasts of venery which were hunted in those days when our author wrote his book, we find the following treated of:—

"The hare, the herte, the bukke, the roo, the wild boore, the wolf [which we may therefore assume was not then extinct], the ffox, the gray (or badger), the cat, the martin, and the otir."

The prevalence of superstition must have been considerable; in the description of the gray, commonly called the badger, the following strange observation appears:—

"Men say that if a child that had never worn

shoes, and the first shoes that he should wear were made of the gray's skin, that child should heal horses of the farcy if he should ride upon them; but thereof I make no affirmation."

Hunting he earnestly recommends as an antidote for all the evils of mind and body, in which most authors on the mysteries and science of woodcraft, whether ancient or modern, fully concur. In those times, when the science of medicine was very little understood or practised, every healthy exercise calculated to invigorate the body was of the utmost importance; and although the devotees of Hygeia might have performed many exploits in their hunting excursions widely different from those of the present day, the same object was accomplished. The fashion of the sport matters but little, so that the benefits appertaining thereto are secured. Upon this subject we glean the following remarks:—

"Now shall I prove that the hunter, that is a good hunter, may not be idle nor dreaming, nor may not have evil imaginations: nor be after any evil works; for the next day before that he shall go on hunting, he shall lie him down in his bed, and he shall not think but for to sleep, and for to do his office well and beseemly as a good hunter should do. And he shall not have to think but on the deeds and needs that he is ordained to do. And he lies not idle, for he hath to imagine to rise early well to do his office, without thinking of other things,—sins or evil deeds."

Following up the advantages of an active life, to divert men's minds from sinful cogitations, the ancient author continues:—

"Wherefore I say that such an hunter is not idle: he may have no evil thoughts, nor may do no idle works; wherefore he must go into Paradise. For by many other reasons which were long to write may I prove these things, but it sufficeth me; for any man that hath good reason knoweth well that I say the high truth. Now will I prove how hunters live in the world most joyful of any other men: for when the hunter riseth in the morning, and seeth the fair and sweet morning, and clear weather and bright, and heareth the song of the small fowls which sing so sweetly with great melody, and full of love, each in his language, after that he learneth of his own kind. And when the sun has arisen he shall see the fresh dew upon the small twigs and grass, and the sun which by his virtue shall make them shine. And that is great joy and liking unto the hunter's heart. After when he shall go to his quest, or searching and shall see or meet with the hart anon, without great seeking, and shall harbour him well and readily without little compass; it is great joy and liking to the hunter.

The excitement occasioned upon laying the hounds on the scent, is thus curiously expressed:—

"Then hath the hunter great joy when he beginneth to sue, and hath sued but a little. And he shall hire others to start the hart afore him. And shall well

know that it is right; and his hounds that shall be that day finders shall come to the lair or to the views and shall there be uncoupled, and all they shall run, and enchase. Then hath the hunter great joy and liking. After he leapeth on horseback if he be of estate, and else on foot, with great haste, for to follow his hounds. And then shall he see the hart pass before him, and he shall halloo, and rout mightily; and he shall see which hounds come in the van chase, and in the middle chase, and which be skirters. And then when all his hounds be passed afore him, then shall he ride after them, and shall rout and blow as loud as he may with great joy and liking. And I assure you that he thinketh to none other sin, to none other evil. And when the hart shall be overcome, and shall be at bay, he shall have great liking; and when the hart is spayed, and dead, he undoeth him and maketh his quarry, and requireth or rewardeth his hounds, and so he shall have great liking. And when he cometh home he cometh joyfully, for his lord hath given him drink of his good wine at the quarry. And when he cometh home he shall do off his clothes, and his shoes, and his hose, and he shall wash his thighs and his legs and peradventure all his body. And in the meanwhile he shall order his supper with worts of the neck of the hart, and of other good meats, and of good wine and ale. And when he hath well eat and drank he shall be glad and well at ease. Then shall he go take the air in the evening of the night for the great heat that he hath had. And then shall he go drink, and lie in his bed in fair fresh clothes, and sleep well and sadly and stedfastly with-

out any evil thoughts of sins; wherefore I say that hunters go into Paradise when they die, and live in this world most joyfully of any other men."

There is a business-like manner diffused throughout the above remarks which proclaims our author to have been a practical man and an enthusiast in the sport which he describes. He observes that the hounds should settle to the scent before the horseman rides after them, a precaution which every sportsman admires. Many of the customs prevail even at the present time, not the least conspicuous of which is the drink of good wine at the breaking up of the quarry, whether it be fox or stag.

A change of dress and the salutary effects of an ablution were luxuries, even in those days, duly appreciated. Doubtless, they passed their evenings in jovial conviviality.

At the period when the book in question was written, the hare was considered the most important object of the chase; a distinction, I imagine, supposed generally to have been acceded to the stag; but, as the hare is the more cunning of the two, there is good reason why she should be honoured with the precedence. The succeeding passage appears on this subject:—

"I speak how the hare shall be hunted; it is to wit that the hare is king of all venery: for all blowing, and the fair terms of hunting, come of the

seeking and the finding of her, for certain it is a marvellous beast."

That the hounds were given to riot is a circumstance not calculated to occasion any astonishment, because it does not appear that they were confined to the chase of any particular species of game. The following directions are given, supposing a hare to be found in a wood or coppice:—

"And then should the horsemen hold him out aside and somedele to fore with long rods in their hands to meet with him and blow a moot, and rechase, and halloo and set the hounds in the rights if they see her. Also for to keep that no hounds follow to sheep nor to other beasts; and if they do to ascry him sore and light and take him up and lash him well, saying, Ware, ha, ha, ware, ware, and lash him forth to his fellows."

Blooding or rewarding the hounds was a ceremony with which considerable importance was connected, and the performance is directed in the following manner:—

"Notwithstanding her rising, squatting, and rioting, so that by strength at last she be beaten by the hounds. Whoso is next should start to get her whole from the hounds, and hold her from the hounds over his head high, and blow the death thither. And when they be come then should she be stripped all save the head, and the gall and the paunch cast away. And all the remainder should be laid on a great staff, or on a board whoso hath it, on the earth;

and there should be chopped as small as it might be, so that it hang together. And when it is so dight then should one of the berners take it up and hold as high as he may in his hands. And when the hounds have bayed as long as the aforesaid master has lust, then should the berner as high as he may, pull every piece from the other, and cast to every hound his reward; and then should the most master blow a note and strake, if so be that he thinketh that the hounds have done enough, and else he should rest a while if the hounds were hot till they are cool and then lead to the water to lap."

The performance closely resembles our manner of "breaking up" the fox, except that the hounds are encouraged "to tear him and eat him," without previously chopping him into mince-meat, "as small as it might be, so that it hung together." There is also a part of the ceremony which appears strange — that of stripping or skinning the hare, all save the head, and that the gall and paunch are to be thrown away. Masters of harriers in the nineteenth century are wont to preserve the carcass for their own *cuisine*, and think it quite sufficient to reward their hounds with the paunch. The "chorus of horns" is likewise dispensed with. Fancy the effect of two hundred hunting-horns all sounding at once in the midst of a large pasture field. The direction for taking the hounds to lap after they have broken up their quarry, is good; when sufficiently

cool, such refreshment may be sanctioned; but I have seen hounds taken to water before they broke up their fox, when over-heated by their exertions in the chase, a custom which I could never reconcile with propriety.

Although the term hunting was applied to chasing the deer with "rennynge houndis," and also slaying the game with "bowes and with greyhoundis," there was evidently a distinction in the preparations for the chase, and the mode of assembling. The sports of the field were not the only amusements; joyful festivity was introduced as a finale, and doubtless the old walls of regal and baronial tenements were made to echo with the voice of hilarity. The succeeding extracts are descriptive of the customs adopted preparatory to hunting:—

"*How the assembly should be made winter and summer.*

"The assembly that men call gathering should be made in this manner. The night before that the lord or the master of game will go to the wood, he must make come before him all the hunters, their helps, all the grooms, and the pages; and should assign to each of them their quests in certain places, and sever the one from the other, that one should not come upon the quest of the other, nor do him no annoyance nor let. And each should quest in his best wise as I have said. And he shall assign them the

place where the gathering should be made at the most ease of them all, the nighest to their quests. And the place where the gathering should be made shall be in a fair mead, well green, where the trees waxith all about, one from the other, and a clear well or some running brook besides. And it is called gathering because that all men and hounds for the hunting gathereth them thither before they go in the quests; and should come again in a certain place that I have spoken of. And also they that parteth from them, and all the officers that parteth from them, should bring thither all that they needeth, each one in his own office, well and plenteously. And should lay the towels and the board clothes all about on the green grass, and set divers meats upon great plenty, after the lord's power is. And some should eat sitting, and some standing, and some leaning upon their elbows. And some should drink, some laugh, some jangle, some bound, some play; and shortly, do all manner of sports of gladness. And when men shall be set at tables, ere they eat should come the hunters and the grooms, with their lymes which have been in the quest. And each shall say his report to the lord and lay the fumes before the lord, he that hath any found. And the lord or the master of the hunting, by the council of them, shall choose to which they will move and run to, and which be the heaviest deer. And the relays shall go, and other things which I shall say more plainly. And then every man shall speed him to his place, and they also haste them that shall go to the finding."

Undoubtedly the arrangements for taking the field were orderly. A post or office was assigned to each attendant, and then the "gathering" in a fair mead, well sheltered with trees, and a repast under the greenwood shade, harmonising with the picturesque — nothing could be conceived more enchanting, "weather permitting," and at a seasonable time of the year, important provisos, which our author has unfortunately omitted. A breakfast *al fresco* in our variable climate on any morning, from the first of November to the month of April, would not be a very seductive attraction. Happily, we now dispense with such ceremonies, or we seek a more genial atmosphere in the spacious dining-room of some hospitable squire, at or near to whose residence the hounds may happen to meet. But why some should eat sitting, others standing, and some leaning on their elbows, is a mystery which I cannot elucidate. Those ancients must have been jovial souls, if they carried out the directions given to them. They are told to drink, laugh, jangle, bound, play, and perform all manner of sports of gladness before the chase began; and if, after it was over, they indulged in the suggestion of a salutary ablution while the venison cutlets were being prepared, with a drink of wine, merry companions, and all the *agrémens* of conviviality, before retiring to the clean sheets, we must accede to them the credit of having

known how to enjoy themselves. If those exertions did not invoke the favours of Somnus, he must have been an unapproachable deity. We are often apt to imagine that the worthies of olden times were wont to enjoy much more happiness than we do at the present. If the foregoing sketches of sporting life in the fourteenth century could be taken as a faithful representation of daily occurrences, the inference would be correct; but when we contemplate the wars, tumults, and contentions with which England was beset, we must fairly conclude that the heroes of those days did not drink from the cup of pleasure without participating in much gall.

Quaintly as the aforesaid directions are laid down, they contain many very shrewd ideas, and conspicuously as many of the customs in England have from time to time undergone changes, most of them appear to be continued to the very letter on the Continent. In a very interesting narrative by "Acteon," published in the *Sporting Review*, we read the following description of the events which he witnessed at the place of meeting of a hunting party in France during the autumn of 1852: —

"The party is at length arrived, and reposing under the picturesque canopy of this ancient monarch of the forest [an old oak tree previously mentioned]. The centre is occupied with divers baskets of cold game pies, roasted meats of various

descriptions, and numerous other delicacies, with hampers of wine, and bags and boxes of sporting tackle. On some of the already empty hampers repose the chasseurs, laughing, joking, and chattering in the most *dégagé* hilarity."

"Of the ordainance, and of the manner of hunting when the king will hunt in the forest or in the park for the hart with bows and with greyhounds.

"The master of the game should be accorded with the master or parker, whither that it be where the king should hunt such a day. And if the seat be wide the foresaid forester or parker should warn the sheriff of the shire that the hunting should be in, for to ordain stables sufficient, and carts eke for to bring the deer that should be slain to the place where the quarries at hunting hath been accustomed. And then he should warn the hunters, and the feuterers whether they have men ready to meet with them, that they should come. And the foresters should go no further nor straggle not about, for dread lest they fray the game ere the king come. And if the kings hunting shall be in a park, all men should abide at the park gate, save the stable, which ought to be set ere the king comes. And they should be set by the foresters or parkers and at the morn early, the maister of the game should be at the wood to see that all be ready, and he or his lieutenant or which of the hunters that him lust ought to set the greyhounds. And whoso be teasers to the king, or to the queen, or to their lesses, as oft as any hart cometh out, he should when he is past blow a mote and rechase, and let run after

to tease it forth, and if it be a stag he should let pass, as is said, and relay for to make the feuterers advised what cometh thereout, and to lasse (unwarrantable) deer he should not let run. And then the master forester or parker ought to shew them the kings standing, if the king will stand with his bow, and where all the remainder of bows shall stand. And the yeomen of the kings bows ought for to be there to keep or make the kings standing, and abide there without noise till the king comes. And the grooms that keep the kings dogs and that chastith the greyhounds should be there with them, for that belongs to the yeomens office. And also the master of the game should be informed by the forester or parker what game the king shall find within his seat. And when all this is done then should the master of the game worthe upon his horse and meet the king, and bring him to his standing, and tell him what game is with the seat, and how the greyhounds are set and eke the stable, and also to tell him whether it be better to stand with his bow, or with his greyhounds, for it is to wit that the lese of his chamber and of the queen should be best set. And there two feuterers ought for to make logs of green boughs or tristes for to keep the king and the queen and the gentlemen and the greyhounds from the sun and from evil weather. And when the king is at his standing or at his tryst whether that he believes, and that the master of the games or his lieutenant have set the bows, and assigneth who shall lead the queen to her tryst. Then he should blow three long moots to the uncoupling."

The succeeding chapter, containing instructions for bringing up a youth intended for the occupation of huntsman, is highly amusing:—

"Know, sir, whatever that there be great or little that would teach a man to be a good hunter. First he must be a child eight years of age or a little older; and if any man shall say why I take a child of so tender age for to put him to travel, I answer and say that all natures shorteth and distendeth, for every man knoweth well that a child of eight years old can more in this time that now is of such things that he liketh to learn than some time could a child of twelve years, and therefore I put him so young thereto; for a craft requirith all a mans life ere he be perfect thereof, and also men seeth that what a man learneth in his youth he will hold in his age. And furthermore to this child belongeth many things, first, that he love his master and his hart and be busy on the hounds. And he must take him and beat him when he will not do that his master commandeth him unto the time the child be a-dread to fail. And first I shall teach thee to take him and write all the hounds names and of the hues, unto the time the child knows them both by the hues and by the names. After I shall teach him to make clean every day in the morning the hounds kennel of all foul things that is therein. After I will him learn to put before them twice in the day fair clean water of a clean well in a vessel there as the hounds drinketh fair running water in the morning and in the evening. After I will teach him that once in the week he void

the kennel, and make all clean and renew their straw. And put again fresh new straw a great deal and right thick, and there as he layeth it the hounds should lie. And the place there as they should lie it should be made of tree a foot high from the earth, and then should the straw be laid upon that. Because that the moistness of the earth should not make them morfounde nor engender any sickness by which they might be worse for hunting. And also that he love a field, and in a wood delighteth, and well eyed, and well advised of his speech and of his terms. And ever glad to learn, and that he be not in nowise no boaster nor no jangeler. Also I will teach the child to lead the hounds twice in the day. In the morning and in the evening, so that the sun be up and especially in winter, then should he let them play long in a fair meadow in the sun, and then comb any hounds after other and wipe them with a great wisp of straw. And this shall he do every morning, and then he shall lead them to some fair place there as the tender grass groweth as corn and other things, that there they may feed them for to take their medicines, for sometime hounds be sick and with grass that they eat void and help themselves."

It must be confessed that the age of eight years was a very early period of life for a boy to commence even the most insignificant studies or operations in the mysteries of woodcraft; but the remark is a very true one, that it requires all a man's life to make him a proficient, much less to

make him perfect in the science. Some insight into the management of hounds in the olden time is obtained from the last chapter; and it is quite clear they had a knowledge of kennel lameness, which malady they called Morfounde. Combing and dressing the hounds with wisps of straw, is evidence that they bestowed some care upon them; at the same time it may be observed that the first-named operation inculcates an idea that they must have possessed longer coats than we are wont to ascribe to any of the varieties of the canine order used even at that period for the purpose of hunting. Walking the hounds into the grass courts is in conformity with present practice, and the fact of their partaking of grass as an emetic had not escaped the observation of the ancients.

Divesting them of the cruelty they convey, the perusal of the ensuing directions would afford amusement; the first is a remedy to rouse a sluggish horse, and the other to subdue an intemperate one:—

For Defy of the Spur.

"Take and shave him the breadth of a saucer on both sides there as you will spur him; then take a lancet and make six issues through the skin the length of a wheat corn, and then take a haundelere and raise the skin from the flesh, and then put in a quantity of burned salt, and this will make his sides to wrankle; and keep him three days, that he be not

ridden, and then set on him a child with spurs, and spur him in that place; and then at night wash that same place with urine and salt and nettles sodden therewith, and this shall grieve him sore that he will never abide spurs after: then let him stand so three days after this washing; then take half a pint of honey and anoint his sides therewith three times, and this shall make the hair to grow, and make him whole for evermore."

"*For to tame a wild Horse.*

"Set on him a saddle and a bridle, and strain the rein upon the saddle head; and then take a doublet and stuff it full with straw, and fasten thereto a pair of hosen, and fill them full of sand; and set a pair of spurs on the heels and fasten the doublet sure to the saddle and the hosen to the stirrup, and then put him in a close field and let him run. And all way as he runneth the spurs will dash him on the sides, and so he shall run till he be weary and that he stand still for weariness; then take the horse and lead him to a stable and lay litter enow under him and clothes enow upon him, and then lift up his feet and smite upon them with a stone, on every foot, and then keep him with little meat three days after, and every day twice or three times come to him and lift up his feet, and knock on them with a stone, and see that he be well curried and wiped, and he will be more tame ever after than any horse that is tame of his own kind."

To rouse an idle horse by such means was certainly a barbarous custom, of which, in modern

days, we have no parallel. It was establishing "a raw" with a vengeance. But the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals was not then in existence. Children were very probably numerous, and maternal affection at a discount. What effect the sight of a young urchin might have upon a horse which had been so tortured, must be left to the imagination to conceive.

The process of taming a wild horse was, no doubt, effective. A dumb jockey with spurs would be a novelty in the nineteenth century, and we have good reason to rejoice that the march of civilisation, refinement, and humanity has introduced measures by which the most noble of our domestic animals, the horse, can be rendered subservient to our use by kind, instead of harsh or cruel, treatment.

A journey on horseback two hundred and fifty years ago, from Edinburgh to London, ere roads were in a convenient state for travelling, must have been an undertaking attended with many irksome anticipations and realities; yet it was one which a monarch was destined to perform. Even royalty might have been at a loss how to render it agreeable. The fertile mind of King James the First, and his courtiers, devised the means; and we find in the account of the journey that his Majesty enjoyed the diversion of hunting. Having advanced as far as Newark, he proceeded

to Belvoir Castle, hunting all the way, attended by many lords and knights. Train scents were prepared, and live hares, conveyed in baskets, were turned down on the heath, which afforded excellent sport for his Majesty. Sir John Harrington's hounds are mentioned as having been in requisition for the occasion, and that the King took "great leisure and pleasure in the same." The contrast is amusing to contemplate, when we consider the style of riding which the royal James was accustomed to enjoy, on steeds highly broken, and so completely subservient to the hand, that, going with their haunches well under them, they never exceeded three-parts speed. The hounds, therefore, must have been equally slow, or the stately sovereign could not have enjoyed their company.

Queen Anne gave encouragement to sporting amusements in the way of racing, but took no part in hunting. Neither did the succeeding kings, George the First or Second; but about the period of their reigns, fox-hunting became an amusement with the nobility and wealthy landholders of Great Britain. Before that time the sport was confined to driving the foxes to ground and digging them out, trapping, destroying them, or worrying them with terriers.

We have ample testimony that, at the period I have named, fox-hunting had assumed a posi-

tion from the inimitable descriptions and directions sung by the poet Somervile, who, I find, was born in the year 1692, and died in 1742. The practical knowledge which he had acquired on the subject is incontestible evidence that the chase of the fox was in vogue; for it would be too great a stretch of imagination to suppose that his ideas arose from problematical fancies. No man could have introduced the forcible arguments, the correctness of which has stood the test of a century, unless he had been in possession of facts to guide his opinions. Although born in the reign of William and Mary, it must have been during the time of George the First that Somervile wrote his beautiful poem, "The Chase." I come to this conclusion from the following impressive lines: —

"As some brave captain, curious and exact,
By his fix'd standard forms in equal ranks
His gay battalion; as one man they move,
Step after step; their size the same, their arms,
Far gleaming, dart the same united blaze;
Reviewing generals his merit own.
How regular! how just! And all his cares
Are well repaid, if mighty GEORGE approve.
So model thou thy pack, if honour touch
Thy generous soul, and the world's just applause."

CHAP. II.

The Commencement of Fox-hunting. — Transition. — Hunting Fox and Hare with one Pack. — Difference of Style in the Fox-hound and Harrier. — Beckford's Opinion. — Extract from Somervile. — The Lords Berkeley of Ancient Times. — Their Hunting Establishment at the Village of Charing. — A furious Elephant shot at Exeter Change. — Establishment of the Old Berkeley Hunt. — Various Kennels. — Vast Extent of Country. — Fox found in Scratch Wood, lost in Kensington Gardens. — Resignation of the late Earl of Berkeley. — Distribution of the Pack. — Division of the Country. — An ancient Establishment of one of the Earls of Lincoln. — Succession of Masters. — Lord Castleton. — The Earls of Scarborough. — Mr. Francis Foljambe. — Succeeded by the Earl of Scarborough. — Mr. George Saville Foljambe. —Sale of Mr. Foljambe's Hounds and Horses.—Kennel Lameness. — The Earl of Yarborough's Hounds. — Their Antiquity and Superiority. — Their Blood. — Huntsmen in the Earl of Yarborough's Family. — The Duke of Rutland's Hounds. — The Earl Fitzwilliam's Hounds. — The Duke of Beaufort's Hounds. — Their Blood. — Celebrated Hounds. — Mr. Corbet's "Trojan." — Mr. Osbaldestone's "Furrier." — The Duke of Beaufort's "Potentate." — Rufus — Remus.

At what date the first pack of hounds was established, whose labours were exclusively devoted to the pursuit of the fox, is a question which cannot be accurately determined. Doubtless there was a transition between the chase of the stag and the hare to that of the fox, which renders the eluci-

dation more obscure than it otherwise would be. It not unfrequently happens, even in the present day, that a gentleman makes his *début* as a master of hounds in pursuit of the hare, and ultimately converts his pack into fox-hounds. This was the case with the renowned Mr. Corbet, and several other sportsmen who have taken high degrees in the noble science. Under similar circumstances it is very fair to conclude, that when fox-hunting was becoming, but had not reached the position of, a distinct amusement, the change was brought about by degrees, and that foxes, stags, and hares were hunted by the same pack. Indeed, that practice has been continued in some of the provincial countries during the present century. When game became more abundant and foxes more numerous, the inconvenience of such a system could not fail to be experienced; for although I have heard wonderful tales of hounds in the olden time staunchly adhering to the scent of fox on one day and hare on the next, whichever they might happen to find in the first instance, I must confess want of faith. Besides, the style of hunting which is perfection in the fox-hound, is not desirable in the harrier. To follow the hare through her various windings, short turnings, and foil-running propensities, a very close hunting hound, that will pick through the coldest scent, is best adapted for the purpose.

When he comes to a check, his natural cast should be close. A fox pursued after that fashion will, in all probability, run from day-break till sunset. Hounds for the chase of the fox require greater speed, with more dash, enthusiasm, and energy. When they come to a check, their cast, without being wild, should be extensive, and they should, to use the simile of an old huntsman, "spread like a sky rocket." Beckford has treated this subject so well that I cannot refrain from making an extract. After some observations on the difference between hunting foxes and hares, he adds:—"The hounds themselves also differ in their manner of hunting: the beagle, who has always his nose to the ground, will puzzle an hour on one spot sooner than he will leave the scent; while the fox-hound, full of life and spirit, is always dashing and trying forward. A high-bred fox-hound, therefore, shows himself to most advantage when foxes are at their strongest, and run an end. A pack of harriers will kill a *cub* better, perhaps, than a pack of fox-hounds; but, when foxes are strong, they have not the method of getting on with the scent which fox-hounds have, and generally tire themselves before the fox. To kill foxes when they are strong, hounds must run as well as hunt; besides, catching a fox by hard running is always preferred in the opinion of a fox-hunter. Much depends, in my opinion, on the style in which it

is done; and I think, without being sophistical, a distinction might be made between hunting a fox and fox-hunting. Two hackneys become not racers by running round a course, nor does the mere hunting of a fox change the nature of the harrier. I have also seen a hare hunted by high-bred fox-hounds; yet, I confess to you, it gave me not the least idea of what hare-hunting ought to be. Certain ideas are necessarily annexed to certain words; this is the use of language: and when a fox-hound is mentioned, I should expect not only a particular kind of hound as to make, size, and strength, by which the fox-hound is easy to be distinguished, but I should also expect, by fox-hunting, a lively, animated, and eager pursuit, as the very essence of it."

Somervile recommends distinct packs of hounds for the chase of different animals. He says:—

"A diff'rent hound for ev'ry diff'rent chase
Select with judgment; nor the timorous hare
O'ermatched destroy. * * *
* * * * * *

But husband though thy pleasures, and give scope
To all her subtle play; by nature led,
A thousand shifts she tries; t'unravel these,
Th' industrious beagle twists his waving tail,
Thro' all her labyrinths pursues, and rings
Her doleful knell."

It is quite evident that some masters of hounds had made the discovery, ere the poet penned those

lines, that it was desirable to keep their hounds to one kind of game.

The noble family of Berkeley have been famous for their hounds of all sorts and love of sport, from the time of William the Conqueror to the present day. The earliest record from which I have been able to gain information is, I understand from good authority, mentioned in Smith's MS., and which states, "When Lord Berkeley kept thirty huntsmen in 'tawny coats,' and his hounds at the village of Charing, now Charing Cross, in the middle of London, and hunted in that vicinity." What animals they were in the habit of hunting I am not able to state; probably, deer, boars, and wolves, as it was the custom to destroy ferocious beasts. Viewing London in its present condition, it seems strange to associate wild beasts and hunting with those parts which are surrounded for miles with human habitations; although a furious elephant, an inmate of Cross's menagerie, was shot as recently as the year 1826, close to the spot where the Lord Berkeley of ancient renown, was wont, attended by his thirty huntsmen in tawny coats, to enjoy his venatic pastime. Devoted as the family were to the chase, I have been anxious to obtain some history of their sporting career from the earliest period to the present time, but unfortunately have not been able to do so. Frederick Augustus, the fifth Earl Berkeley, who was born

in the year 1745, hunted a most extensive country for many years, distinguished by the title of the Old Berkeley; but the precise time when the hounds were established I have not been able to ascertain. His lordship had a kennel at Cranford, his seat in Middlesex; another at Gerrard's Cross, in Buckinghamshire; a third at Nettlebed, in Oxfordshire, where the house is yet standing, but not the kennels; the fourth at Berkeley Castle. Commencing at Scratch Wood, close to Wormwood Scrubs, about five miles from London, the country held by the late noble lord reached beyond Thornbury, in Gloucestershire; from point to point, somewhere about 120 miles. The kennels appear to have been singularly situated; the Gerrard's Cross kennel not being more than twelve or fourteen miles from Cranford, and that at Nettlebed not much more than a similar distance from Gerrard's Cross; whilst from Nettlebed to Berkeley Castle it cannot be much less than eighty miles, the country around which was principally devoted to cub-hunting. When hunting the intermediate country, the hounds, I suppose, must have had temporary accommodation at inns. The foxes were not so numerous in those days, and the hounds were removed from place to place according to circumstances. Previously to Sir John Cope hunting the Bramshill country, the Old Berkeley paid occasional visits to some parts

of it. In fact, they were the only hounds kept to hunt over a vast extent; and wherever foxes were heard of, they went to hunt them. I have been informed by Mr. Grantley Berkeley that the old huntsman, Tom Oldaker, told him the hounds once found a fox in Scratch Wood, and lost him in Kensington Gardens, about which there was in those days some rough ground.

The late Earl of Berkeley gave his hounds and resigned the country to the Club, a few years before his death, which was in 1810; they were kept by subscription till 1842, and the servants continued to wear the orange plush, or "tawny coats" of Lord Berkeley's ancestors. Mr. Harvey Combe was of late years the leading man. They did not, however, continue to hunt so great an extent of country as formerly, and, in course of time, new countries were formed. The Earl Fitzhardinge, then Lord Dursley, established a pack of hounds either in 1807 or 1808, with which he has hunted the Gloucestershire portion ever since. The old Berkshire and Mr. Phillips' countries have been formed more recently. Latterly the Old Berkeley country was confined to the neighbourhood of Rickmansworth, where Mr. Harvey Combe had kennels. In 1842 the country was given up, in all probability never to be restored, and the hounds were purchased by Lord Southampton; but there could have been

very little, if any, of the leaven of the old sort. The masters of these hounds had been dependent on drafts for many years, to which Sir Jacob Astley's pack was added when the baronet gave up hunting in Norfolk. On Mr. Osbaldeston's retirement from the Pytchley, and unfortunately from fox-hunting altogether, he disposed of his celebrated pack to Mr. Harvey Combe. This was in 1834; therefore it was principally the blood of Mr. Osbaldeston's kennel that passed into Lord Southampton's, although, in the course of eight years, much of that must have been lost, from the circumstance already named. If I am not mistaken, Mr. Harvey Combe did not hunt the Old Berkeley country at all in 1833, as that must have been the year when Captain Freeman was hunting it with the hounds which he brought from the Southwold.

The country around Retford claims notice from having been hunted at a very early date. More than two centuries ago it was hunted by Theophilus, the fourth Earl of Lincoln, who died in 1667. He was succeeded by his grandson, who maintained the establishment twenty-five years, when he died without leaving issue, and the hounds were either given up or supported by the gentlemen residing in the country. Soon afterwards, however, the country came into the possession of James Sanderson, Lord Castleton, of Castleton in Ireland, and Sandbeck, who kept the hounds

till his decease in 1723, having a very noted huntsman named Twistleton. On the demise of Lord Castleton, Thomas, the third Earl of Scarborough, succeeded to the estates, and continued to hunt the country twenty-nine years, when the final who-hoop of mortality closed his earthly career. At the death of the last-named nobleman, in 1752, the titles and estates came to his son Richard, the fourth earl, who maintained the honours of the chase with great spirit during the succeeding thirty years, at the expiration of which time he paid the debt of nature; when the property fell to his eldest son George Augustus, the fifth earl, who did not inherit a taste for hunting, as his noble predecessors had done; consequently the hounds were again returned upon the resources of the gentlemen residing in the country. This was only for a short period, when they were taken in hand by Mr. Francis Foljambe, grandfather of Mr. George Saville Foljambe, under whose management they remained till the year 1788, at which period they were taken, during the lifetime of his elder brother, by Richard, afterwards sixth Earl of Scarborough, who kept them with great success and in very first-rate style till 1822, when age and infirmities compelled him to resign; on which occasion the hounds were disposed of to Mr. George Saville Foljambe, a most zealous and highly accomplished sportsman, who hunted them

in person several seasons, uniting great skill, untiring perseverance, and a liberal expenditure of money, by which means he succeeded in establishing one of the most celebrated packs of hounds in the kingdom. From defective sight, in 1845 Mr. Foljambe was compelled to give up a pursuit of which he was a most unwearied patron and adherent. Under the influential hammer of Messrs. Tattersall, the hounds were sold in lots at the kennels, and realised upwards of 3500*l.* The horses were taken to London, where four of them produced 1170*l.*, and the remaining sixteen averaged 115*l.* each. The aggregate amount is a sufficient test of the judgment which prevailed throughout the establishment. The principal purchasers of the hounds were Lords Galway and H. Bentinck. The former nobleman hunted the country one season, since which time they have been under the direction of Mr. Lumley, Mr. Foljambe continuing to take much interest in the breeding department, although unable to accompany the hounds in chase. At one period Mr. Foljambe had much to contend with from kennel lameness. He erected kennels at Beilby, the lodging-rooms of which were formerly apartments in the old mansion-house. The soil was dry and sandy: here the malady evinced itself in the most formidable manner; all devisable means and remedies were tried in vain, till they were removed to another

situation. About the period when Mr. Foljambe took the country, a portion of it was, as I am given to understand, retained by John, the fourth Earl of Scarborough, who hunted it till his death, which unfortunate event was occasioned by his horse falling in some ruts, in 1835, and was succeeded by Lord Henry Bentinck, who removed into the Burton country in 1842; Sir Richard Sutton at that time taking the Cottesmore, Captain Percy Williams following Lord Henry Bentinck in what had been denominated the Rufford Hunt. Thus no vestige of the original pack kept by the Earl of Lincoln can be traced, or even of any antecedent to those of the two Earls of Scarborough.

From the best information I have been able to obtain, the Earl of Yarborough's hounds are the oldest established of any that have continued in the same family; they having descended from heir to heir about two centuries. The noble house of Yarborough has paid vast attention to the blood of their fox-hounds. It is justly esteemed the acmé of perfection. For a long series of years no hound has been retained unless he was in every respect worthy of preferment. They are celebrated for stoutness, courage, speed, exquisite scenting powers, and symmetry. Governed by a taste hereditary in the family for the same good properties, that confusion of sorts manifest in

many other kennels has been avoided in this. Whenever it has been found necessary to apply to other establishments for fresh blood, it has been obtained principally from those of the Duke of Rutland, the late Lords Lonsdale and Middleton, Lord Fitzwilliam, Lord Henry Bentinck, Sir Tatton Sykes, Sir Richard Sutton, Mr. Osbaldeston and Mr. Foljambe; but having so many of their own, the alternative is not so frequently essential as it is in kennels where the means are limited. In the huntsman, likewise, the same preference is apparent. The name of Lord Yarborough's huntsman has been too well known in hunting circles for many years to require an introduction; the present man, Mr. William Smith, succeeded his father, who, in like manner, followed others of his kindred. Frequent changes of either masters of hounds or huntsmen commonly occasion great confusion, and often reduce those which boast of great superiority to little better than a scratch pack. Perfections are regarded so differently by different men. This may be accepted as another reason why Lord Yarborough's hounds have attained such a high degree of perfection: they have experienced none of the difficulties incidental to changes, either of masters or huntsmen, except when the unrelenting hand of death has issued the mandate which we must all obey.

Not being in possession of authoritative informa-

tion, I cannot state precisely how long a time hounds have been in the possession of the Duke of Rutland's family; but I believe I am correct in stating that it is upwards of one hundred and thirty years; consequently they stand next to the Brocklesby in antiquity. By that remark, however, I must not be understood to represent that they stand second to any in perfection. The blood has been highly valued for many years, and there cannot be a kennel of any note in which it is not to be found. Many years ago the celebrated pack with which Mr. Heron hunted Cheshire was added to the Belvoir kennels, and that contained much of Mr. Meynell's blood.

Earl Fitzwilliam's hounds have been established nearly, if not quite, a century, and are highly valued. At a very early period, somewhere about the time when the then Duke of Beaufort commenced hunting the Heythrope country, the Crewe and Foley hounds were introduced into these kennels.

Among the oldest-established packs are, the Duke of Beaufort's, which are readily traced back to his Grace's grandfather, at the close of the last century. The stud-hounds which his Grace has procured from other kennels of late years are chiefly from the Duke of Rutland's, Lords Yarborough's, Fitzhardinge's, and Fitzwilliam's, Sir Richard Sutton's, and Mr. Horlock's; the latter

gentleman's pack having belonged to the celebrated Mr. Warde, the blood stands in high repute, and, their character differing from most others, it is very discernible in the progeny. They were large, slashing hounds, good workers, but their size above the standard of the present day. There is, however, not much of this blood in the Badminton kennel.

Mr. Corbet had a celebrated hound called Trojan; Mr. Osbaldeston another, of great renown, called Furrier; the Duke of Beaufort has one equally worthy of distinction, called Potentate, and, although twelve years old when I was at Badminton, in 1852, was enjoying his "otium cum dignitate" about the premises, with becoming importance, as worthy veterans are entitled to do. His pedigree will bear scrutiny, and his progeny is diffused in most kennels of celebrity. He is by Wonder out of Prudence, Wonder by Remus out of Whimsey. Prudence was bred by the late Lord Lonsdale, by his Lictor out of Pamela. Whimsey by the Duke of Rutland's Wildman out of the Badminton Charmer; the latter by Sir Thomas Mostyn's Edward out of Whimsey (entered in 1816), by Mr. T. A. Smith's Collier, out of the Badminton Gladsome, by their Roister out of Graceful. Potentate is a black and white tanned hound, with great power; and I think I can discern a similarity in him to the late Lord Londsdale's

hounds, to which he is related, although his blood is principally of the Badminton sort. He was remarkably good in drawing for his fox; was generally the first to find him, and particularly excellent at picking out a cold scent. Rufus and Remus are likewise two remarkably fine specimens of the fox-hound; they were entered in 1849, and in their early days evinced so much superiority that, in the entry for 1851, two couple and a half, the progeny of Rufus, were entered, and, his excellence having reached the ears of Sir Richard Sutton, he procured his services as a stud-hound in 1853. Rufus and Remus were by Lord Fitzwilliam's Hermit out of the Duke of Beaufort's Rarity. Hermit was by Mr. Drake's Hector. Hector by Lord Southampton's Hazard. Hazard by the Duke of Beaufort's Harbinger. Further on the dam's side I cannot ascertain, as Earl Fitzwilliam does not publish lists of his hounds, after the custom of most other fashionable kennels. Rarity I remember seeing some years since, when I was particularly impressed with her appearance: she was a dark pied bitch, and her sons somewhat resemble her in colour. Her sire was Rutland, her dam Wary. Rutland by Mr. Wyndham's Cardinal out of Rally; Rally by Wanderer out of Raffle; and then goes through a line of the Badminton blood to the late Lord Lonsdale's and the late Sir Thomas Mostyn's,

which is forty years ago. Rufus and Remus bid fair to rival Potentate, or any other predecessor, in perpetuating a valuable succession in these and other kennels. They show great power and symmetry, without a particle of coarseness, and are excellent in chase.

CHAP. III.

The Rights of Country. — Ancient Forest Laws. — Introduction of Fox-hunting Observances. — Customs by which the Rights of Fox-hunting are held imperative. — Position of Masters of Hounds. — Power of Landowners. — Laws of Trespass. — Privileges enjoyed by Masters of Hounds. — Running Foxes to Ground. — Terms on which Masters of Hounds are installed. — A Master of Hounds may lend Coverts to a Neighbour. — Precautions against Disputes. — Division of Countries. — Cases of Dispute. — Precedent. — Right to follow Hounds. — A good Example. — Reference to Beckford. — Advantages of a National Hunt Club.

THE rights of fox-hunting, as they are now acknowledged, have necessarily been adopted, altered, and extended to meet the exigencies of the times and the customs which have been introduced: they are strictly conventional. Forest laws and those appertaining to the preservation of game are of very ancient date, having been introduced, it is supposed, by the Saxons; and they have been variously treated upon by authors who wrote concerning them; but they were exclusively confined to the laws of the land, and in force only for the purpose of protecting forest rights and privileges, including, among other items, the preservation of beasts of venery and game, in which class the fox was not enrolled. Before fox-hunting was

modelled into an established form for the sake of amusement, it follows, as a matter of course, that no rules were required. In those days when foxes were regarded as mischievous animals, whose speedy destruction only was contemplated, it was considered perfectly justifiable to annihilate them under any circumstances, by digging, trapping, or other devices; indignities from which they are now secure. When fox-hunting assumed a degree of importance, and masters of hounds became more numerous throughout the kingdom, it became necessary to introduce rules and regulations for their guidance, founded upon reasonable principles and good sense, although unconnected with common law. In fact, when legal measures are put in force, they are in some measure opposed to it; yet the rights of country or the usages of fox-hunting are held as paramount by every honourable chief of the noble science. In days of yore, when countries were very extensive, which was the case with the Old Berkeley and others, some of the present observances were not altogether necessary. Of these may be mentioned the etiquette observed of not digging for a fox which had been marked to ground beyond the limits which they were accustomed to draw. In many parts of the kingdom there were not any hounds kept; therefore such intermediate districts might be regarded as neutral, and it would not have been considered any

infringement of right to get at foxes which might run into that neutral ground, by any available means. The prevailing taste for fox-hunting has occasioned the establishment of hounds in almost every part of England; and thus, when countries were divided, subdivided, new portions hunted, and foxes preserved for the express purpose of sport, it became necessary to adopt rules whereby the limits were to be defined, the coverts of each hunt specified, and the observances to be practised in the event of one master of hounds finding his fox in his own and pursuing him into the country of his neighbour. To these points, indeed, the rules of the chase are almost exclusively confined.

As there is not any national club or society of masters of fox-hounds to regulate these affairs, after the fashion of the Jockey Club on racing subjects, the observances are only kept in force by the feelings of mutual respect which bind gentlemen to the performance of those principles which are essential to the common weal, and are consequently handed down by word of mouth. Every master of hounds considers it incumbent on him to maintain the rights and privileges of his country for his own benefit, and the promotion of sport, also that when he resigns, he may leave it inviolate to his successor. Every landed proprietor possesses a legal right to authorize any

master of hounds to draw his coverts, or to prevent any one from entering them, if he thinks fit to exercise the prerogative; but these powers, happily, are very seldom put into effect in opposition to the conventional regulations by which the rights of fox-hunting are guided. Controversies have occasionally happened as to boundaries; but they are not of frequent occurrence, and they have generally arisen respecting coverts which, being at a distance from the kennels of one hunt, and nearer to those of another, the owners of the coverts have thought fit to decide the question. Whatever may be the expediency of such arrangements, they certainly are at variance with conventional custom, and can only be effected by the intervention of the laws relative to trespass. In conformity with the acknowledged usage, all the coverts within a given district should be drawn only by the hounds which hunt the country. The privilege of stopping the earths appertains solely to the master of those hounds; he has no right to stop any earths beyond his boundary without permission, although sometimes mutual arrangements are made to put to on the morning of hunting certain earths in the borders of neighbouring hunts, when the hounds meet at certain places. This is a very desirable agreement, because etiquette debars any master of hounds from digging out a fox under any circumstances, unless within

his own boundary. There are some nice distinctions on this point, which cannot be too scrupulously observed. For example, although a fox must not be dug out if he goes to ground in a neighbouring country, if the earth be so shallow that he can be bolted or drawn with a common hunting-whip, it is lawful to do so; but the soil must not be disturbed with a spade or any similar implement. A fox may be bolted by a terrier, provided the terrier belongs to the master of the hounds, and is therefore with them; but it is held inadmissible to borrow a dog for the occasion. This is certainly a very punctilious exaction, but it is one for which there is a precedent, and the propriety of it has been admitted. In the event of a fox going to ground in a drain, which is open at both ends so that the terrier can be entered at one of them, that process may be resorted to; but it is not permissible to cut a hole into the drain so that the terrier can enter, because that would be an infraction of the rule that the soil shall not be broken. A fox may also be dislodged by the application of a wisp of burning straw to the opposite end of a drain, if such a device will have the effect; or if the drain communicates with a pond of water, he may be driven out by letting the water flow. When a fox is found to be making for an earth in another country, a whipper-in may be sent forward to place himself in such a position

that he can head the fox back; but then he must not stop the earth with turf, clods, stones, sticks, or any such permanent impediments; neither is it right that he should proceed to the place till the fox is on foot. This last observance, upon reflection, is very proper; because if it were otherwise, by stationing men at all the earths, they would be most securely blockaded. When in chase, if hounds run their fox into a covert belonging to a neighbouring hunt, they are justified in pursuing their game; but, if they cannot carry the scent into the covert, they must not enter; because, although it may be highly probable the fox has sought that refuge, unless there is a scent to decide the point, it is possible he may have skirted it, and it would be an inexcusable breach of decorum to make a doubt the pretext for disturbing a covert belonging to another hunt.

The prerogatives which a master of hounds enjoys of drawing the coverts, of stopping the earths, digging out foxes which may happen to run to ground, and all such matters, are conceded by the general consent of the owners of the respective coverts; and although any individual may, by authority of the laws of trespass, warn him not to draw the coverts, such a course is at variance with the conventional rules of fox-hunting, and is therefore very seldom acted upon. A gentleman resident in the country would be

very reluctant to render himself so unpopular, even if he were not on friendly terms with the master of the hounds; for such a proceeding is a cause of great annoyance to the sporting community; and it is scarcely possible that any gentleman can be installed as master of hounds but with the consent of a majority of the most influential owners of coverts. Thus he becomes in the position of a trustee for the members of the hunt; and it is, consequently, a duty of his office to regard all the rights and privileges appertaining thereto; therefore he cannot resign *in perpetuum* any coverts belonging to the country without the approval of a majority of the covert owners. At the same time he may, as a matter of accommodation, allow any other master of hounds to draw certain coverts, provided the sanction is obtained of the persons to whom those coverts belong. Whenever such arrangements are entered into, reducing the terms to writing will be found the best security from disputes: most of the disagreeable discussions which have arisen were in consequence of that simple precaution having been neglected. It is obvious that a lapse of years must render verbal agreements doubtful: more especially if one of the parties should happen to die.

Alterations of boundaries have not been very frequent of late years; but several divisions of

countries have taken place. During the period when Sir F. L. H. Goodriche had the Quorn, that country was divided; the north-western portion, known as the Donnington Hunt, became a separate district; and they were hunted by two different packs till the season before last, when Sir Richard Sutton having the Quorn, and the Donnington becoming vacant, he undertook to hunt them both; but that does not, as I am given to understand, reunite them beyond the term of Sir Richard's mastership. The Heythrope country, which had been hunted by the late Duke of Beaufort for many years, became a distinct country at about the same time as the Donnington, as it was in 1834 that his Grace gave it up. This country was hunted by the respective Dukes of Beaufort upwards of eighty years; but lying wide from Badminton, and foxes in that neighbourhood becoming more plentiful, it was an alteration conducive to the convenience of all parties. The H. H., hunted with remarkable success by the late Mr. Villebois, included the Hursley, until the period when Captain Haworth had the management. The division of the Bramshill Hunt, formerly the late Sir John Cope's, is of more recent date. During the lifetime of the worthy baronet, a portion of the country was lent to Mr. Thoyts, and subsequently to Mr. Montagu; but when Sir John, in consequence of increasing

age and infirmities, gave up his hounds and country to Mr. Whebble in the year 1850, the whole was again formed into one; and so matters continued till 1852, when a division, which is understood as a permanent arrangement, was made; — Mr. Whebble continuing to hunt the western portion, and Mr. Garth the eastern, having the River Loddon as a boundary.

It is much to be regretted that misunderstandings should ever arise between two masters of hounds hunting adjacent countries; and whenever such disputes occur, reference to some disinterested parties is by far the most satisfactory means of adjustment. Unfortunately it sometimes happens that the privileges which the law affords are brought into effect in opposition to the conventional usages recognised by sportsmen. The question turns upon this point. Will a gentleman avail himself of that power which the law affords him? or will he be guided by those rules which the class and society in which he moves have adopted for their mutual convenience, harmony, and welfare? Supposing a gentleman who is possessed of an extensive estate, on which there are fox-coverts within the precincts of an established hunt, thinks proper to keep a pack of hounds to hunt an adjoining country that is vacant; resorting to his legal power, he might undoubtedly draw the coverts on his own pro-

perty, and he might exert his influence in persuading neighbouring gentlemen to take their coverts from the original hunt and permit him to draw them; but such proceedings would be totally at variance with the conventional usages of sportsmen. If the general custom were otherwise, the most annoying circumstances would constantly arise to frustrate the efforts and overturn the arrangements of masters of hounds. Every estate that might happen to be sold, having coverts thereon, or any such coverts changing proprietors by inheritance or otherwise, might be the means of nearly breaking up many hunting establishments, if the code of conventional regulations did not in a general way, by consent, prevail over the laws of the land. The sporting country of Warwick may be mentioned as an example of the etiquette observed with respect to the privileges of masters of hounds. In the days of Mr. Corbet, the whole of the country now denominated the Warwickshire was hunted by that gentleman, together with that which has been since called the North Warwickshire, and altogether it was very extensive. None of Mr. Corbet's successors have ever hunted the whole of it. Coverts on the boundaries, and woodlands, have been lent to masters of hounds by way of accommodation and convenience to all parties, and for several years a great portion was not hunted at all, till Mr.

Vyner entered on the northern division, — an arrangement sanctioned by the owners of the coverts and the master of the Warwickshire hounds; but it was not separated so as to be considered an independent or integral country. It was held on the same conditions by Mr. Hellier, and also by Mr. Willson, the respective successors to Mr. Vyner. Again becoming vacant, some of the coverts have been drawn by the Atherstone hounds. Mr. Selby Lowndes enters upon it on similar terms to those which were observed in the case of Mr. Vyner. Another example may be introduced of the Bourton Woods, in the Earl Fitzhardinge's Broadway country, which are the private property of Lord Redesdale. Earl Fitzhardinge's hounds have drawn those coverts ever since they were established, and they continue to do so, although Lord Redesdale, being the master of the Heythrope, could exercise his legal right and draw them with his own hounds, if he did not consider the conventional usage a paramount obligation between masters of hounds.

There have been conflicting opinions respecting the privilege of following hounds. By some it has been argued that the fox is a noxious animal, and therefore prejudicial to the public welfare; consequently, that his destruction is a laudable act. With this view, it has been held that a

person may trespass on the lands of another for the purpose of killing the fox, providing unreasonable damage be not committed. On the other hand, regarding fox-hunting purely as an amusement, and contending that the pleasure of the chase, not the destruction of the animal, is the avowed object, an action, it is said, can be maintained against persons for trespassing. The last must be admitted to be the true version of the affair, however expansively legal technicalities may favour a transgressor of the law. This would be a formidable impediment to fox-hunting; but in general the sport is held in such universal favour that few persons are disposed to take advantage of occasional damage. In the early part of the reign of William IV. an Act was passed relative to trespass, in which there is a clause exonerating any persons who may be found on lands following hounds, or greyhounds in fresh pursuit of stag, fox, or hare, already started on other lands.

Several examples might be introduced of disputes relative to the right of drawing particular coverts; but I am not aware that any advantages would result from doing so, particularly of naming those hunts the members of which have been engaged in controversy. They have in most cases arisen from some imperfectly defined conditions; but as a precedent I may introduce a circumstance

which occurred in a midland county many years ago, in which the courteous and manly bearing of both parties cannot be too highly commended. A gentleman of great celebrity as a master of fox-hounds was in possession of a certain country, when a noble duke established a pack of hounds, and one day fixed to meet at one of his own coverts, but which belonged, according to fox-hunting usage, to the hunt presided over by the first-named gentleman, who thereupon wrote to the duke, observing that according to the customs or rights of country he could not draw the covert, although it was his own property. The fixture was consequently altered. Soon after this, the master of the hounds, whose prerogative it was to draw it, made an appointment to meet there; the noble duke was present, and was thus addressed by the gentleman in question: — "My Lord Duke, I am extremely sorry that my duty as the present occupier of this country compelled me to claim my right to draw this covert; having done so, I now concede it to your Grace so long as I hunt the country, and have no doubt it will afford you good sport."

On the rights of fox-hunting, Beckford is silent; probably very little notice was taken, in his time, of many events which then being unimportant did not call for observation; but times have changed materially, and those which were considered trivial

circumstances would now be very important items in the promotion of sport.

To preside over and to promote the interests of racing, the Jockey Club exercises powers scarcely second to those of the Legislature. The chase has no such guardian for its protection. It has prospered generously without; but would it not flourish more vigorously under some similar patronage? Hunt clubs have been in existence for many years in various countries, and their effects connecting hunting with other subjects of social intercourse, have been most successful. Previously to the brilliant career of Mr. Meynell, there was a hunt club in Leicestershire, which had their headquarters at Quorndon Hall, the residence subsequently of that renowned chief of the noble science, who purchased the mansion from Lord Ferrers. Warwickshire has a club which flourished in the days of Mr. Corbet. The Worcestershire Hunt Club is likewise of old standing and material influence. The Beaufort and the Berkeley Hunt Clubs command their own positions without eulogy from me.

A national hunt club in London would be a popular association, and, in the event of dissension, would be a tribunal for reference. The Army, the Navy, the Church, have each of them their leading clubs, whose locality is in the great emporium of wealth, intelligence, enterprise, and

learning; and wherefore should not the chase be represented with the same social spirit? Politicians of all orders,—Tories, Conservatives, Liberals, Whigs,—Law, Physic, Nautical Enterprises, and nearly all the engagements in which pleasures or profits tempt us to embark, have their orders represented at the great metropolis. But fox-hunting, although recognised as the first of our national amusements, has no presiding genius to adopt rules for the guidance of its votaries, watch over its general prosperity, or minister to its social properties.

CHAP. IV.

Origin of Hounds. — The Wolf, the Jackall, and the Fox. — Intercourse between the Dog and the Wolf; also between the Dog and the Fox. — Excellence of British Dogs in the Early Ages.—Opinion of Dr. Johnson. — Dogs used for Hunting in Ancient Times.—Superiority of English Fox-hounds.—Improvement.— Northern and Southern Hounds.—Ambition. —Pace.—Comparison of Pace and its Effects. — Pedigrees of Hounds. — Mr. Meynell's Hounds; how they were dispersed. — The Lambton Hounds. — The Cheshire Hounds. — The Duke of Rutland's Hounds. — Mr. Meynell Ingram's Hounds. —Mr. Muster's Hounds. — Mr. T. A. Smith's Hounds in 1814. — Mr. Corbet's Hounds. — The celebrated Hound Trojan: his Origin and Performance. — The principal Progenitor of Mr. Corbet's Pack.—Beckford's Opinion on in-and-in Breeding.—On other Subjects.—Somervile's Caution.—Mr. Corbet's Hounds sold to the late Lord Middleton. — His Lordship transferred the Hounds to Sir Tatton Sykes. — Villager, a Stud-hound at Berkeley Castle. — Mr. Corbet's Occupation of Warwickshire. — Death of Mr. John Warde — Sale of his Hounds — Description of them.

MOST naturalists are of opinion that the varieties of the canine race are derived from the sheep-dog; that, however, is a theory concerning which some doubt may be expressed. There can, however, be no question that originally there was but one variety, but of the peculiar characters of that variety it is utterly impossible to form a decided

opinion. The effects of climate, domestication, food, and cultivation, have wonderful influences on animals. It is therefore more rational to come to the conclusion that the different varieties have been produced by those means, than to imagine that the animal we now term a sheep-dog was the primitive parent. It would be equally reasonable to suppose, that the fox-hound, the blood-hound, the pointer, the setter, the spaniel, the mastiff, or the greyhound, was the original, and that the sheep-dog is descended from one of them, as that all those classes should be identified with the sheep-dog as the common ancestor. The sheep-dogs of different countries differ most essentially from each other. Take, for example, the dogs used for this purpose in Scotland, called the Colly, and compare them with the bob-tailed curs which are known in England. Some authors go even further than this, and argue that the dog was not originally created, but that he sprang from the domestication of the wolf, the jackall, or the fox.

How can we reconcile such a theory when we bear in mind that the wild, ferocious wolf is the avowed enemy of man, and that the faithful dog is his constant, trusty companion and protector? Nevertheless, it is authenticated that the dog and wolf will breed together, and the same intercourse has been known between the dog and the fox, but it is very rare; and as no beneficial purpose can

result from such a cross beyond that of curiosity, it is an experiment which very few persons think fit to trouble themselves about. It is, however, scarcely necessary to dwell upon such remote subjects, inasmuch as we cannot come to any positive conclusions. From whatever source they may have sprung, the dogs of Great Britain have been celebrated from a very early period. Grotius, Appianus, and Nemesianus—ancient authors who have treated on the chase—mention the excellence of British dogs for hunting; yet there is much obscurity as to the kind of dogs they referred to. They are described as being crooked, lean, coarse-haired and heavy-eyed. It has been asserted by Dr. Johnson in his Life of Sir Thomas Browne, that the dogs used by the ancients did not hunt by scent; but in this the learned author may have been mistaken. When pursuing their game in the woodlands, thickets, and rough grounds which prevailed, it is assuming too much to suppose they could have hunted exclusively by view. It appears very certain they had dogs which followed both by scent and by view; and thus, by combining their individual powers, were enabled to subdue their game. Hunting was not confined to the plain open country, and we learn from ancient writers that the chase was frequently very long. The ancients might have had dogs similar to our greyhounds, which followed their

game by sight, and there is no doubt they had; but they could only be used in open districts, and that is no argument that they did not also possess animals which followed by scent, although they might not be so well disciplined, nor perhaps able to hunt so cold a scent as the hounds of later date. It is a faculty inherent in some kinds of dogs, and is no doubt improved by being called into action. The extracts which I have given from the old work of Edmund of Langley, clearly show, that hunting was performed with hounds whose individual properties enabled them to hunt by scent and by view. Thus, those which ran by scent, were used in the coverts, and those which ran by view, in the open. The horn was also used indiscriminately to call them together.

However the variety may have been produced, the English fox-hound stands unrivalled for all purposes of hunting, and it is unanimously admitted that he soon degenerates in any other country; which is proof incontestible of the effects of treatment and of climate. By continuing to breed from animals endowed with certain predominant faculties, and gifted with particular characteristics of shape and make, the degree of perfection to which they have arrived has undoubtedly been accomplished. The blood-hound, or sleuth-hound, is most probably the line from which our fox-hounds are descended; for as

it appears that hounds were not kept exclusively for the chase of the fox much more than two centuries back, we cannot come to the conclusion that the peculiar description of hound was attempted to be bred until his services were required. The hounds we read of some four or five hundred years ago, are described as black and tan, to which the blood-hound of the present day bears an identical resemblance. How that variety was produced it is impossible to say. From time to time, by crossing, and perhaps the effect of climate, other colours have come forth; and from them, there is good reason for asserting that the present race of fox-hounds is derived. There also appears, on the authority of old writers on hunting subjects, a distinction between the hounds in the north and south of England. They are described as the northern and southern hounds. The former, having been bred principally in Yorkshire, were characterised with smaller heads and lighter in their make; more speedy and active than the southern variety, but not endowed with so much acuteness of scent. The others had large, square-formed heads, with long ears, slow, but persevering, and possessed of most delicate nose. We may readily understand the gradations through which the hound has passed ere he reached the degree of excellence at which he has arrived. Masters of hounds are not contented

unless they can combine many more perfections in their packs than those which flourished Anno Domini 1750. Pace, for example, was a quality not so much valued. It was not till the ardent spirits who were the first to press upon hounds in chase in the days of Mr. Meynell, that it was considered essential to breed them so fleet as to render it difficult to override them. Thoroughbred horses becoming more numerous, and being introduced in the hunting-field, is another reason why it became necessary to procure speedy hounds, and by breeding from that sort, the quality of pace has been attained. From the accounts we read of runs in the earlier days of fox-hunting, it is quite certain they did not go anything like the pace of the present time. In another chapter I propose to give some accounts of those chases in illustration of this assertion; it is therefore unnecessary to dwell upon that subject. There may be some persons who are of opinion that in the attainment of speed, the scenting faculty has been reduced; it may be so, to a trifling extent; but the excitement of the chase, and the perfection of the hound, have been materially enhanced. Old Towler of 1748, might have been supposed able to hunt a scent ten minutes later than the Duke of Beaufort's Potentate of 1848 could own it. Supposing Potentate ran his fox over six miles of country in thirty minutes, and it took Old Towler

forty minutes to accomplish the same distance, they would, as far as hunting properties are concerned, be upon equal terms at that point; but as foxes usually travel on, Potentate would have considerably the best of it at the end of the next three miles.

It would be interesting if we could trace the pedigrees of hounds, as we can of horses in a stud-book, to an early date; but unfortunately that cannot be done to any extent. The uncontrollable vicissitudes occasioned by deaths and resignations, in consequence of which many of the oldest-established packs have been sold in lots, have caused them to be dispersed; but for the information of those who are curious in such matters, I will endeavour to show, in the best manner I am able, the kennels into which they have passed, and will begin with those of Mr. Meynell, so justly distinguished as the old Quorn blood. In the year 1793, Mr. Lambton purchased a pack of hounds from the Lord Talbot of that day. They had been hunting a portion of Staffordshire, in the vicinity of Ingestrie Hall, Rugeley, and Cannock Chase. Previously to that time, in 1780, Lord Talbot procured eighteen couples and a half of hounds, crosses between Mr. Meynell's and Lord Fitzwilliam's, and also Mr. Meynell's and Lord Ludlow's blood; and in subsequent years the former gentleman's kennel was

had recourse to for fresh infusions; likewise Mr. Heron's, who at that period hunted the Cheshire country, and had much of the Quorn blood in his kennel. The latter draft was procured by Mr. Lambton in 1813. The Lambton hounds, it will be remembered, were sold to Lord Suffield, to go into Leicestershire in 1838, at the large price of 3,000 guineas, being 1,000 more than had ever been given for a pack before. It consisted of sixty-six couples of old hounds and forty couples of young ones. They only remained in Lord Suffield's possession one year, when they became the property of Mr. Robertson, who took them into Berwickshire. At his retirement a few years afterwards, if my memory serves me, they were sold in lots. A good deal of the Quorn blood went into the Cheshire kennels, as Mr. Heron bred from that source for many years; but little, if any, of it can be recognised there at the present time, in consequence of the unfortunate malady which broke out in the Cheshire establishment some years since. Kennel madness was the cause of their being nearly all of them destroyed. Mr. Heron sold his pack many years ago to the Duke of Rutland, and those hounds were extensively used to breed from; therefore, in all probability, there is as much or more of the old Quorn blood in the Belvoir kennels than any other. Mr. Meynell Ingram of Hoarcross, Staffordshire, grandson of

the celebrated Mr. Meynell, had some of the old blood from Mr. Heron, and that is another kennel to which it can be directly traced. Ten couples of Mr. Meynell's hounds were presented by that renowned sportsman to his friend the late Mr. Musters, who sold his hounds to Mr. T. A. Smith in 1814, when the latter gentleman was hunting the Quorn country.

The history of Mr. Corbet's celebrated pack with which he hunted Warwickshire is singular, and therefore deserving of particular notice. He became the purchaser of some harriers at Tattersall's, among which was a bitch named Tidings; but her pedigree was not known. Being very superior, and having the appearance of a dwarf fox-hound, she was sent to the Pytchley kennels, and put to the Earl Spencer's Trueboy, and she produced a hound named Trojan, which was entered in 1780, ten or twelve years before Mr. Corbet went into Warwickshire, at the time when he hunted in the neighbourhood of Lichfield. Meeting one day at Chillington, a fox was found which ran a ring, and returning leaped the park wall, over which Trojan followed him; but none of the other hounds could accomplish it. On being taken through the gate they found Trojan, single-handed, had marked his fox into a drain. He performed a similar feat of activity at Sandwell Park, the seat of Lord Dartmouth, between Birmingham

and Wednesbury. A fox was found in a neighbouring wood, and he cleared the high wall into Sandwell Park, followed by Trojan only. The pack, as on the former occasion, entered at the gate, and found Trojan carrying on the scent, when the wall at the opposite side arrested their progress, with the exception of the single hound. He still carried on the scent to another wood, where the pack joined him, and, pointing for Uffinoor Wood between Halesowen and Hagley, after an excellent run, they killed their fox. I have often heard the exploits of this celebrated hound spoken of by the late Mr. Holyoake (father of Sir F. L. Goodriche and of Mr. T. Holyoake), who was a distinguished member of Mr. Corbet's hunt. Trojan, however, could not have been in existence at the time Mr. Corbet entered upon the Warwickshire country, because, as nearly as I can make out, it was not till about the year 1792 that he had the kennels at Stratford-on-Avon. Be that as it may, Trojan was the favourite progenitor of the pack, and, from what I have been informed, Mr. Corbet rather went into extremes by breeding too closely; yet the very great fame which his hounds attained must be confirmatory of the assertion that no extensive indiscretion of that kind could have been practised. Beckford says, "A very famous sportsman has told me that he frequently breeds from brothers and sisters. As I should be very

unwilling to urge anything in opposition to such authority, you had better try it; and if it succeeds in hounds, it is more, I believe, than it usually does in other animals." Whether this great authority referred to Mr. Corbet as "the very famous sportsman," I cannot presume to state, as he makes no allusion to any name, neither does he recommend incestuous breeding from his own experience; and breeders of hounds of the present day are unanimously opposed to it. Beckford very judiciously observes, "that to look well they should be all nearly of a size; and I even think they should all look of the same family." Somervile adds weight to this in his usual beautiful style: —

> "But above all take heed, nor mix thy hounds
> Of different kinds; discordant sounds shall grate
> Thy ears offended; and a lagging line
> Of babbling curs disgrace thy broken pack."

Again Beckford says, "There are necessary points in the shape of a hound which ought always to be attended to by a sportsman." Holding these opinions in great respect, I have often been surprised at masters of hounds resorting to kennels for fresh blood, the characteristics of which are totally different from those of their own packs in symmetry and style of working.

On Mr. Corbet's retirement from the list of masters of hounds in 1812, he sold his pack to his successor, the late Lord Middleton, who hunted

Warwickshire till 1822, when, in consequence of a severe fall, his lordship declined, and the hounds were transferred to the care of his friend Sir Tatton Sykes. Judging from a portrait which I have seen of the celebrated Trojan, and a stud hound from Sir Tatton Sykes's, named Villager, at the Berkeley kennels in 1852, the same character is preserved. Whether the latter is a descendant of Trojan, I have not been able to ascertain. But he may be thus described; his colour is black and white, with tan, rather compact in form, with short good legs, very deep in his chest, capital loins and thighs, and remarkably quick and active; has a sensible-looking head, and is twenty-three inches high.

That it is not possible Trojan was in work when Mr. Corbet hunted Warwickshire, will be gleaned from the following particulars. The precise time of his commencement as a master of hounds is not known; but he was born in 1752, and therefore, assuming that on coming of age in 1773, he made his *début*, that must be very nearly the correct time. At first he had some fox-hounds, with which he hunted in his native county of Salop; but Mr. Childe, of Kinlet, hunting one portion, and Mr. Forester, of Willey Park, another, he was confined for want of space, and converted them into harriers. After a time he obtained possession of the country near Lichfield, and re-

sumed the chase of the fox, the village of Shenstone being head quarters from whence he hunted some of the boundary coverts in Warwickshire; and in 1792, or thereabouts, he entered upon the whole county, having his kennels at Stratford-on-Avon. Trojan was entered in 1780, therefore it is not possible he should have formed a portion of the working hounds so many years afterwards: it was with his progeny that Mr. Corbet shone so conspicuously as a master of fox-hounds.

As an extensive breeder of hounds of the old school, the late Mr. John Warde stands pre-eminent. This highly esteemed and worthy specimen of the English country gentleman died in London, Dec. 9th, 1838, at the great age of eighty-six, having been a master of hounds during the lengthened period of fifty-six years. To render this statement explicit, it is necessary to remark that he sold his last pack to Mr. W. Horlock, in 1826, for 2,000 guineas, at which time he was hunting the Craven country in Berkshire. Mr. Warde must have commenced at a very early age; as, prior to 1776, he hunted the country around Westerham, in Kent, when he went to Yattenden, in Berkshire, but only remained there two seasons. During the succeeding eighteen seasons he occupied that part of the country in Oxfordshire, which is situated near Bicester, and, as I am given to understand, he also at the same period hunted

Warwickshire for a part of the season; but that could only have been prior to Mr. Corbet's time. Mr. Warde subsequently hunted the Pytchley country, and made an addition to his kennel, by procuring some hounds from his predecessor, the Earl Spencer. In 1808, Lord Althorpe purchased the hounds at the previously unheard-of price of 1,000 guineas, and took the country in which they had been hunting. On this transaction, Mr. Warde made a reservation of a few of his bitches, wherewith he was enabled to continue his own blood, and making purchases from other establishments, soon raised another pack, with which he commenced operations in the New Forest, where he continued about six years, and then hunted the Craven country until the end of the season, 1826. Mr. Horlock, at that time, came forward with 2,000 guineas, in exchange for which he obtained the hounds, and Mr. Warde retired from the field. Having seen these hounds after they came into the possession of Mr. Horlock, I can form a tolerably accurate idea of their appearance: they were on a very large scale, though I have reason to believe Mr. Horlock had improved them considerably in that respect; that is to say, he had reduced the standard, and bred them finer. The blood is dispersed throughout several kennels of the present day, and it may be pretty generally distinguished.

CHAP. V.

Animal Instinct, Forethought. — The Squirrel. — The Fox. — Habits of Animals. — Cultivation of Instinct. — Somervile on Instinct. — Instinct of Terriers. — Degrees of Instinct. — Propensity of Foxes. — Different Nature of Foxes. — Their Style of Running. — Their Haunts. — Borth Rocks. — Stoutness of Mountain Foxes. — Line of Country which Foxes take when disturbed by Hounds. — Woodland Foxes. — Feeding Foxes in Game Preserves. — Foxes hunt inferior Animals. — Degeneracy of Foxes. — Their Stoutness considered. — Abundance of Foxes. — Chances in Favour of Hounds. — Collective Mischief. — Individual Censure. — Civilisation. — Extract from Buffon. — The Fox defended. — Another Extract from Buffon. — Some of his Opinions confuted. — Nature of some Foxes. — An Occurrence with the Albrighton Hounds. — A similar Event with the Vine Hounds. — The same Subject illustrated with the Duke of Beaufort's Hounds. — A Fox found in a Stubble Rick. — Drawing Blank sometimes accounted for. — A Fox found in a Barley Field by Earl Fitzhardinge's Hounds. — In a Turnip Field by Lord Gifford's Hounds. — Places of Safety. — Fox found in a Magpie's Nest. — Foxes disappearing unaccountably in Chase. — Movements of a Fox when hunted. — A Tame Vixen. — The late Captain Bowen Davies' Tame Fox. — Anecdote of a Fox killing a Hare. — Breaking up the Earths. — Closing the Earths at the Commencement of the Season. — Stub-bred Foxes in the Oakley Country. — Fox-stealing defeated. — An Event in Hampshire. — A Practice with Fox-stealers. — A Run with the Vine Hounds. — Two striking Illustrations. — Stout and Wild Foxes in Hampshire, the Reason for it. — Stopping Foxes underground. — Other Reasons for breaking up main Earths. — Alleged Objections. — Confutation. — An Observation from Beckford. —

Coverts in the early Days of Fox-hunting. — Fox-ground. — Progress of the noble Science. — Artificial Coverts introduced. — Prevalence of Gorse Coverts in Leicestershire and Northamptonshire. — Public Taste. — Charnwood Forest. — Rockingham Forest. — Warwickshire Woodlands. — Wychwood Forest. — Principal Places of Meeting. — The Lower Woods in the Duke of Beaufort's Hunt. — Other Woods in the same Hunt. — Principal Woods in Earl Fitzhardinge's Berkeley Country. — Woods in his Lordship's Cheltenham Country. — Woodlands in Shropshire. — The Albrighton and Worcestershire Countries. — Bewdley Forest.

INSTINCT is a ruling faculty possessed by animals of every description: it exists, in a modified degree, even in the lowest. The powers of reasoning with which the human race is gifted, derive their origin from instinct, cultivated by the aid of speech and literature. By comparing and communicating the consequences of past events, we are enabled to form certain conclusions of what may be likely to result from similar occurrences. This faculty, nevertheless, is limited; for we cannot either foresee or control the events of an hour. Hunger prompts a man to eat, and a similar impulse induces animals to do so likewise. The civilised classes of the human race make provision for future wants; but very few animals follow that example: most of them depend on the bounteous hand of Providence for their supplies. The squirrel is said to lay up a store for the winter season, in order that he may crack his nuts at leisure; and it is instinct that teaches him

to do so. The fox, in some measure, partakes of this forethought, by concealing a part of his food when he accidentally procures more than he requires for present purposes. But it is for his own security, and the preservation of life, that instinct is most conspicuous in this animal, and with which, on many occasions, recollection of past events is associated. This knowledge may then be termed the result of experience, and it is that which enables some crafty old specimens of the vulpine family so frequently to elude the huntsman's skill. All living creatures seek protection from the vicissitudes of the elements according to their habits and constitutions. It is one of the most forcible impulses of nature which prompts them to do so, and it is one with which the lowest classes of animals are endowed: it is innate, or hereditary. Varieties of circumstances lead to numerous difficulties, necessities, desires, pleasures, pains, and conclusions by which instinct is cultivated, till it almost appears to assume the refinement of reason, and analogy enables us to trace so many degrees of this faculty in the brute creation, that we are almost led to the belief that they are gifted with the latter power.

Somervile thus beautifully expresses himself:—

"Nor will it less delight th' attentive sage
T' observe that instinct, which unerring guides
The brutal race, which mimicks reason's lore,
And oft transcends."

Among our domesticated animals, none possess so near an approach to the power of reasoning as the dog. Many extraordinary examples might be introduced, and I have in my own possession two which serve to illustrate this remark. They are both terriers; one a rough, hardy, Scotch-bred animal, that will attack any living creature he may be set upon; the other is of the Isle of Skye kind (a lady), she would not kill a mouse. The former is constantly tied up in the yard: the latter has the privilege of the house, and every room in it. Whenever she sees me preparing for a walk, she instantly runs off to the dog, and, by her joyous movements and a peculiar whimper, prepares him for the pleasure of being my companion, and, in the absence of the faculty of speech, it is quite obvious she has a method of conveying her ideas to her fellow creature. Being thickly surrounded by game, the hares, rabbits, and pheasants, will occasionally visit my garden, which is open to the yard in which the dog is secured, and I can decide to a certainty when game is trespassing, by the peculiar manner he has of throwing his tongue. It is quite a different note to that which he utters when strangers or intruders of any kind are on or near the premises, concerning whom he is impressed with the propriety of giving me warning. Such faculties almost induce us to believe that the canine race is gifted with the powers of reason.

There are two kinds of instinct, one which leads to a supposition of what will most probably happen; the other from a knowledge of what has followed certain events, and will occur again in case those events are repeated. The first is enlightened instinct, the peculiar faculty of man—the other blind instinct possessed by animals. The latter includes hunger and thirst, the necessity for shelter against the vicissitudes and inclemency of the weather, the desire to repeat causes which have produced agreeable sensations, the fear of pain or death, with others calculated to continue the propagation and preservation of their respective kinds. Foxes, after they have been pursued by hounds, may be said to gain a kind of mechanical instinct, or restlessness; they have experienced terror, and fatigue may have caused them pain; therefore they hold in remembrance a variety of sensations; a sense of danger is established to which "terror adds wings." After having once undergone the ordeal of being hunted, they are more on the alert to avoid a repetition of the ceremony; and whatever the stratagem may be by which a fox first makes his escape, he will generally adopt the same *ruse* on future occasions. This is convincing proof that they possess the faculty of memory. Habit inculcates a chain of conceptions, differing materially from each other according to the circumstances from which they

derive their origin. This affords a reason why foxes differ so very essentially in the methods they adopt to effect their escape when chased by hounds. The wild mountain fox, the woodland fox, and the fox bred in small game preserves, spinnies, and gorse coverts, differ from each other in their modes of living. When hunted, their style of running is directed by their habits. The first of these is the most hardy; like the necessitous labourer, he has to work for his living. Accustomed to being in rocky cavities, adorned in some instances by the unassuming privacy, oftentimes by the grandly picturesque beauties of nature, his birthplace and retreat are generally secure from all human intrusion. In the most fashionable parts of the midland counties such places do not prevail; but there are a few such spots in Derbyshire. The Wrekin, the Titterstone and Brown Clee Hills, in Shropshire, are noted places of this kind, and the foxes which frequent them are proverbially stout; on the sea-coast they are more numerous, and some of these refuges may be found in Yorkshire. There are many in different parts of Wales, especially in Breconshire, and in the Goggerddan Hunt. There is a kind of cavern called the Harp in Borth Rocks, in the last-named country, truly awful to contemplate, where many a fox has saved his life and many a gallant hound has rushed headlong to destruction, by endeavouring to pursue his

game along the narrow winding path which leads from the top of the precipice to the chasm midway between the summit and the sea-shore. There are several coverts within a few miles, and foxes found in them frequently make for the stronghold, and, should the hounds follow, accidents to some of them are almost inevitable, unless the huntsman and whips are aware of the line they have taken in time to stop them. The mountain foxes are certainly the most difficult to kill; accustomed to travel considerable distances for food, they are acquainted with an expansive country, and, not being overburdened with superfluous flesh, are generally in good wind. I think there is little doubt that the first time a fox is found, he generally treads the mazes he has been accustomed to when in search of his food, unless foiled by some peculiar circumstances. Having led the hounds as far as his knowledge of country extends, he will very probably return, or endeavour to return, to the place where he was found, especially if there be any earths in that locality. If foiled in that attempt, and driven into a country with which he is unacquainted, the difference in his style of running may be detected; holding coverts, main earths, dingles, and such like places, are no longer objects which he endeavours to gain. Not being aware of their locality, he will now pass by a head of earths, or skirt a covert. Whether a fox will

instantly quit a large wood on being disturbed by hounds, will depend on circumstances. If it happens that he gets on his legs considerably in advance of the pack, and the scent is not good enough to press him, in all probability he will continue to run those paths with which he is intimately acquainted, among thorny brakes and briers, through which the hounds find a difficulty in following him. If he escapes the first attempt made on his life, by whatever means he effects his safety, I believe he will, on every future occasion, if possible, resort to the same manœuvre; and as this is a conclusion which I have arrived at from observation, I shall, in due order, relate some events in support of this opinion.

Foxes which are bred in extensive woodlands, where game is not profuse, although not so wild in their nature as the mountain breeds, are much more so than those which are bred in small coverts, gorse preserves, and spinnies abounding with rabbits appropriated to their support. Where game is assiduously cultivated, it becomes necessary to supply the foxes with food during the breeding season, and it is the trouble of doing that which occasions some of the animosity which many keepers entertain against the species. As to foxes taking game to any extent, if well fed at the time I have named, it is a perfect fallacy. But I will not go so far as to assert, that such

semi-domesticated foxes will afford the runs those do which are compelled to seek their own living in a wilder manner. Hunted by hounds themselves, foxes retaliate upon the inferior animals, and, in their turn, enjoy the pleasures of the chase in the pursuit of rats, mice, moles, frogs, beetles, and such like vermin. Perchance they may now and then hunt a hare up to her form, but the rabbit is much easier prey: the fox can follow this game to ground in many instances, but it is not so easy to pounce upon a hare when sitting. I have heard it related that foxes will actually run hares down, following by scent like hounds; but I think they must be very much distressed by hunger before they resort to such alternatives. At the same time, all such exercises are calculated to increase their bodily powers and their knowledge of country. Generally speaking, I do not fancy the foxes are so wild as they were when I first became an observer of their habits. So far they may be said to have degenerated, and that may be from the treatment they receive. I can well recollect on approaching the large woods in Shropshire, before a hound was put into covert, a fox would frequently break away from the opposite side, and, unless some quick-eyed whip, or other person of experience was there to give notice, the run would be lost. Many persons entertain an opinion that they are not

so stout, and, perhaps, that may be the case likewise, but they are by far more numerous, and, therefore, what may be lost on one hand is more than compensated for on the other. This decrease of stoutness may be accounted for: changes in circumstances have led to changes in the habits of these animals; their wants are more carefully provided for in the way of food, and, therefore, not having to travel far in search of it, they are not in such high condition. There is another cause why they should be less shy, in consequence of the increase of population: in many cases their haunts are more frequently intruded upon by man, and, seldom experiencing any molestation or injury, except when chased by hounds, they gain confidence. If we are to compare the long runs which we have heard and occasionally read of in the days of Meynell, Corbet, Forester, and Warde, with those of the present period, we should most assuredly come to the conclusion that the foxes are by no means as stout; but then it must be remembered the speed and condition of hounds have greatly improved. The greater proportion of foxes which we now have are those which are bred in moderate-sized and small coverts, and, as I have before observed, they are not either so wild or stout as those which are bred in mountainous districts and large tracts of woodland. When found in such places as the

former, unless the underwood is very strong, they are generally obliged to quit. With a fair start and a holding scent, the chances would be in favour of the hounds killing their fox; but it frequently happens that a numerous jealous conclave of hard riders exert their utmost energies in the preservation of the vulpine tribe. Collectively they will ride so close to the pack as to prevent the hounds hunting from want of room, and will not unfrequently absolutely ride between the hounds and the object of their chase, as if desirous of destroying the scent by every available means. Although collectively they do this, every man individually censures such proceedings. The knowledge of country which these foxes acquire arises principally from their being hunted. Their preservation has, undoubtedly, become the general rule, and their destruction by unfair means is happily the exception. It is proved that they do not commit those depredations among game which at one time they were supposed to do. Peradventure, like the human race, they are more civilised; for they do not levy the contributions on the lambs, of which they were accused in former days, most frequently very unjustly. Buffon gives us some curious remarks on the habits of the fox, the correctness of which I will not presume to dispute; but the animal has mended his manners considerably since the time

when the great naturalist made his observations. Moreover, they were French foxes concerning which he made his remarks: our English ones are not such desperate marauders. He tells us of the fox that, "He forms his earth at the side of a wood or near a hamlet; he listens to the crowing of the cocks and the cackling of the poultry; he scents them from afar — he chooses skilfully his time and his opportunity — carefully conceals his movements and his intentions — creeps stealthily along, at times even dragging his belly along the ground — springs suddenly on his prey, and rarely fails of capturing it. If he can manage to leap the enclosure, or burrow underneath, he loses not an instant — he ravages the poultry-yard, puts all indiscriminately to death, and then craftily retires, carrying with him part of what he has slain, which he takes away and conceals among the grass, or carries to his home. Shortly afterwards he returns in search of more, which he removes and hides in like manner; he returns a third, and even a fourth time, until either the appearance of daylight or some stir about the house, warns him to retire and return no more." Where is the farmer's wife who could read this without horror, anticipating the fate of her poultry? That the fox is not the guilty culprit, whose constant practice it is to commit these de-

predations, we are certain; for if he were, the henroost would soon become untenanted. Within a radius not exceeding one mile of the spot where I am now writing, fifteen brace of cubs were littered this season, and, within five miles, thirty-five brace, to my certain knowledge. Many more there may be which I do not know of; where they are so numerous, if they were in the habit of committing the depredations named by Buffon, there would not be a head of poultry in the country. But there is scarcely a farm-house in the neighbourhood where they do not keep from twenty to thirty hens, and in many instances double that number. The game in the district to which I allude is also very abundant. Buffon was not content with watching poor Reynard to the henroost, and accusing him of devastations, but adds, "He plays the same game with the nets of the bird-catchers, and the snares in which they take thrushes and woodcocks. He is stirring with the earliest dawn, and often visits the traps several times during the day."

"He examines the snares and the lime twigs, and regularly makes off with the birds that have been taken in them; these he conceals in different situations, at the road side, in a furrow or rut, among the grass, or at the root of a tree."

"He often leaves them there for days, but still knows well where to find them when wanted. He chases the leverets on the common, not unfre-

quently takes the hare upon her form, and seldom fails of surprising such as may have been wounded: he digs out the rabbit in the warren, discovers the nest of the partridge and of the quail, secures the mother upon her eggs, and, in short, destroys a vast quantity of game."

According to Buffon, the fox levies insatiate contributions on the henroost and on the game preserves; and, if his opinions were correct, would very soon devastate an extensive country; but practical experience proves that such is not the case. The havoc described as being committed among the nets and snares of bird-catchers must be imaginary; because, having laid his devices, where is the bird-catcher who is not, as the fox is represented to be, "stirring with the earliest dawn," and watching his snares? The fox may occasionally indulge his appetite with a leveret or a hare that may have been wounded; but the most scrupulous game preserver would scarcely begrudge him the latter delicacy, knowing that the hare would otherwise perish and rot. He may perhaps surprise a hen pheasant on her nest if not amply provided with food, such as rabbits and rooks, with which it is the duty of every keeper to supply them during the breeding season of the birds, which is the period when the vixens have to procure food for their cubs, and, by the time the latter have attained any size, the pheasants have

taken to the trees as a roosting place where they are tolerably secure.

I have already observed, that I am led to believe whatever manœuvre a fox resorts to the first time of his being hunted, if it proves successful to his escape, he will, if possible, adopt on future occasions. I will now introduce a few circumstances in corroboration thereof.

Several years since I was hunting with the Albrighton hounds in those very severe woodlands the Ran Dans, on the borders of the Worcestershire country, and neutral with the two hunts. They found a fox, and ran him upwards of two hours. These hounds had on previous occasions found a fox which always beat them. The Worcestershire hounds had experienced the same disappointment. The fox invariably persevered in working round the wood, and when the hounds arrived at a particular spot, they always came to a check of considerable duration. At length it was determined to watch that point, which was at a division in the covert, where a very strongly plashed hedge extended a distance of two or three hundred yards, and connected the two portions of the woods. It was there discovered that the fox had gained so much advantage by running along the top of this fence, and no doubt laid himself up there till the hounds had passed him, when he retraced his steps and regained the thick under-

wood behind the disappointed pack. This stratagem being detected, the hounds were laid on in view, which caused him to break covert; and in a short time they ran into him.

On the 8th of February, 1851, I met the Vine hounds at West Heath. They found a fox at Tadley Place, and after a short ring ran him to Eyeford, where he ran the plantations and covert for some time. On the boundary of the covert there is a large pool of water, with tumps of earth or little islands, separated from the banks by deep water; there are also many sedges, rushes and tufts of rank grass, similar to those which generally grow in such situations. The hounds brought a very cold scent up to the margin of this pool, and, as I was close to them at the time, I observed one hound throw his tongue in angry mood, as if he had seized his fox, which I expected was the case; but at that moment the horn was heard back in covert, and the under whip being at hand immediately turned the hounds to the huntsman, who, not being then aware of this circumstance, made his cast. From what I saw, and the result, I was quite convinced the fox had crossed through the water, and laid himself up on one of the rough tumps of earth and sedges; but the scent being bad, the hounds scarcely owned it up to the water, although the single hound that spoke to it knew the fox was very near to him. When the hounds

had left that point, and while they were working to recover the scent in the covert, the fox got upon his legs again, and was fortunately viewed, and finally after two hours' running was killed on a similar spot within a short distance. This fox had, no doubt, found by experience, that in such situations he was not pursued with the same ardour he was on dry land. The place abounds with wild ducks and other birds of aquatic habits, and most probably it was in search of them that he first became acquainted with its locality.

Another circumstance, illustrative of this argument, occurred with the Duke of Beaufort's hounds on the 11th of April, 1853. They met at Newark Park, and commenced operations by drawing the covert close to the lodge gates, where they found immediately. Being on the outside, I viewed the fox away, and observed that he ran along the top of a wall more than twenty yards. It was a fine, bright, warm day, and the scent far from being good. They ran him on the surrounding hills, which abound with coverts, for some time, and, after taking a ring, he pointed over the open for Tiley, and I had an opportunity of observing, by the manner in which the hounds picked up the scent by some of the walls, that the fox had resorted to his manœuvre of running along the top of them; when the nature of the walls permitted him, descending, as

he was compelled to do, at gate-ways and other spaces, where the line was broken. In this way, he reached Tiley, when, being somewhat distressed, the hounds killed him in the act of descending from a wall. It was an old fox, of a very light colour, and I have little doubt he had performed the same trick, though more successfully, on other occasions.

I have heard an anecdote of a fox, one without a "brush," that was many times found by the late Duke of Beaufort's hounds, when they hunted the Heythrope country. His haunt was generally near the same spot, and when hunted he always took the same line of country, and by some stratagem escaped; but his device was never discovered. At length, however, he was killed, probably from being disappointed in accomplishing his trick.

An event was related to me of a somewhat curious kennel, which a brace of foxes had adopted in the Badminton country. On the 3rd of January, 1853, the Duke of Beaufort's hounds met at the Lower Woods, and found a fox in the Withey Moor, which they lost at Kilcot. It was reported that a fox had been frequently seen in the open field near Little Badminton, and that he had his kennel in a stubble rick, placed against a wall, to which spot the hounds were taken; but they were unable to dislodge him, or in fact to decide that he was "at home," and went away to draw

another covert. A countryman who was present persevered, and, having pulled down a portion of the wall, with the assistance of a dog, bolted a brace of foxes. The hounds being brought back and laid on the scent of one of them, ran him through Swangrove to Sopworth, from thence to Sherston and Foxley, where they killed him. It may be remarked, that the weather had been unusually wet, and in many places in the vales the foxes had no dry lodgings to resort to; therefore their taking to the hills, and selecting a spot where they could lie secure from floods, was by no means an unaccountable proceeding. The companion fox, which was not hunted on this occasion, continued to use the same place of seclusion. On the 20th of the same month the hounds again visited the stubble rick; but, although the fox was not there at the time, there was evidence of his having been very recently, from the fresh print of his pads, and other conclusive proof, in which sportsmen could not be mistaken. This may serve as an explanation, why it frequently happens that hounds draw a great extent of country, without being able to find, when weather or some particular cause induces the foxes to abandon for a time their usual places of resort. I remember on the 19th of November, 1844, Earl Fitzhardinge's hounds met at Hazleton Grove, when they drew the Brake,

always considered a sure find blank; but they found in the Grove, and went away at a great pace, leaving Puzedown on the left, to a spinny, where they doubled up their fox in double quick time. In consequence of the coldness of the season, and lateness of the harvest, there was a field of barley standing, in which it was stated a fox had frequently been seen—no doubt one which belonged to the brake previously mentioned as having been drawn blank. On the approach of the hounds he was instantly on foot; was viewed crossing the wall, and went away over Puzedown, when he turned to the left and across the Cheltenham road, as if making a point for Compton or Star Wood; but he again bore to the left and recrossed the road by Puzedown Inn. Up to this point the pace was first rate; but, as the hounds were now running down wind, the scent diminished, and they came to a check. Nevertheless they hunted him to the New Gorse, where an unfortunate halloo to a fresh fox destroyed the chance there was, with but an indifferent scent, of killing him. Another occurrence of a similar nature took place on the 23rd of November, 1848, with the H. H., which were then hunted by Lord Gifford. They met at Ellisfield, and found their first fox in Hal Wood, which they lost near Herriard. His lordship was informed that a fox had been seen constantly in a field of turnips on

Hatch Warren Farm, and was induced to go in search of him; the hounds had spread all over the field without touching upon him. Not being accustomed to find foxes in such situations, very probably they did not draw well. As the land seemed alive with partridges, it did not appear likely that the fox was there; and Lord Gifford was in the act of taking his horn out of the case to call the hounds away, when the fox jumped up within fifty yards of the spot; a singular instance of concord between the fox and the feathered tribe. The hounds were soon at him, and ran him merrily over the road, by Kempshot to Southwood, through Bull's Bushes to Ash Park, Steventon to North Waltham, back to Bull's Bushes, and from thence to Itching Row, near Oakley Park, where, after a chase of two hours, they ran into and killed a fox, but certainly not the one they found in the turnip field, for which I can assign two reasons: the one they killed had a pad damaged, and was therefore lame, which the one originally found was not; and a fox was on several subsequent occasions seen in the turnip field. Where they changed I will not take upon myself to determine, unless it was in Bull's Bushes, the second time they got to that covert, which is most probable, as there certainly were two foxes there when the hounds ran into it the first time.

Foxes have been frequently known, when

chased by hounds, to seek refuge among ivy growing about stumps of trees, in farm-buildings, and other unaccountable places. They are no doubt haunts which they have been accustomed to frequent, in the first instance, in search of food; for it is not probable, in the heat of pursuit, that they should be able to select such sanctuaries on the impulse of the moment. I have often known hounds run their fox to a certain point with a good scent, and lose him instantaneously, as if he had vanished into ethereal space. On those occasions, it is evident they must have gained some unaccountable place of safety, to which the hounds had not the power of scenting them. I remember hearing of an event which occurred with the justly celebrated Mr. Meynell's hounds, which shows the great patience, perseverance, talent, and keen-sightedness for which he was so eminently distinguished, and also what extraordinary places foxes will sometimes seek for refuge. They were drawing a gorse covert, when a single hound, that could be relied upon, spoke. "That will do," exclaimed Mr. Meynell: but the hounds could make nothing of it. They were drawn round again to the place where the single hound had spoken; but they could not "roust him out." Still persevering, I believe upwards of two hours, the field became impatient, and the greater portion went home. At length, holding a con-

sultation with Raven, his huntsman, he inquired the exact spot where the hound spoke, which was close to a bush that he pointed to. "Then get off and examine it," said Mr. Meynell. It was a low bush or stump of a tree which leaned over the gorse, and in which was an old magpie's nest, where the fox had rolled himself up and was peeping over the side of the nest at the proceedings below. Raven whipped him out, laid on the hounds, and, with a good scent, had a capital run, and killed the intruder on the magpie's forsaken property near the kennel.

It does not very frequently occur that opportunities offer of watching the movements of foxes when they are chased by hounds; but a circumstance of this kind happened to me on the 22nd of January, 1839. I was staying at Cheltenham at the time, and, not having a horse to ride on that day, walked out to call on a friend near to where Lord Fitzhardinge's hounds met, which was at Norton Village. While sitting in my friend's dining-room, I saw a fox crossing a meadow in front of the house. We immediately went out, and heard the hounds at a considerable distance, but evidently not running towards us. Our attention was turned to the wily animal, and we scrupulously observed his motions, in which he favoured us by running in the direction of where we stood. He stopped occasionally, as if to listen,

and then trotted on again, quietly reconnoitring the country, and selecting the most convenient places in the fences to pass through. He actually appeared as if he were *thinking* what course to pursue. At this crisis, however, he was safe from the pursuit of the hounds. At the time I mention, the railway was in progress of formation between Cheltenham and Gloucester, passing within a field or two of the spot, and from which direction the fox came. My friend and I therefore proceeded to the embankment, expecting to hear or see something of the hounds, and there found upwards of one hundred men at work, by some of whom we were informed that the fox had passed among them and close to a bull terrier, which the owner had luckily secured. On making inquiry afterwards, I discovered the reason the hounds were not then in pursuit of this fox. They had found him in Norton Wood, and, with a good scent, ran him at a racing pace to Down Hatherley and through the covert, where a fresh fox was disturbed, when, after running a mile clear of the wood, they got on the heel of the latter, and ran it several fields up wind before it was possible to stop them. Thus the hunted fox, after having had a good breathing, escaped; and his movements, as already mentioned, were regulated by his doubt for his safety. From this it appears that, when not pressed by hounds, foxes will

merely jog on at a moderate pace, and will only increase it in order to keep at a convenient distance from their canine adversaries; and I have very little doubt but that is their general custom. Nimrod was of the same opinion. He observes—"It is the nature of all game to fly in proportion as it is pressed in flight. The fox before the slow hound is, I should say, nine times in ten not a yard further ahead than he would be before the quick one, having reason to believe (and I here speak from my experience) foxes regulate their speed by the cry of hounds." I shall recur to this subject in a future chapter on the comparative speed of hounds of past and present times.

As a proof to what state the domestication of the fox may be brought, and as an original idea, I must here introduce an anecdote of a tame fox kept in Shropshire in Mr. Boycott's time, and also when Mr. Walter Gifford had the management of the Albrighton country. Nearly in the centre of the hunt at Cranmere, close to the house, was a covert well known as Mr. Vickers's Gorse—a name given to it in consequence of its being on the estate occupied by that gentleman, who in early life was an excellent sportsman and a first-rate performer over a country; and, although an accident subsequently prevented him participating in the pleasures of the chase, he was not the less desirous to promote the sport of others. Mrs. Vickers and

her niece, Miss Miller, were most determined admirers of fox-hunting, and generally met the hounds whenever they were within reasonable distance. But Mrs. Vickers' devotion to fox-hunting was not confined merely to participation in the sport; for it extended to the promotion of it. She had a tame vixen fox chained up near the house, and an artificial earth constructed for the accommodation of her *protégée*. On the approach of the "merry spring time," the vixen fox was liberated and allowed to roam into the gorse — an indulgence which she did not abuse, but returned to her accustomed earth in due course of time, where she brought forth a litter of cubs several successive seasons. These cubs, being allowed to stray off into the gorse, were generally found when the hounds paid their respects. I will not, however, go so far as to assert that they were of much value as affording sport — they were too much domesticated; but the fact of the vixen returning after having been liberated shows the attachment she had for the earth to which she was accustomed.

My highly esteemed friend, Captain Bowen Davies, late of Maesycrigau in Carmarthenshire (who, alas! has been gathered to his last home), often related to me an event which occurred with a tame fox which he had. He kept fox-hounds at the time; and in the summer months a few of the old favourites were permitted to range about the

premises; but they never attempted to molest the fox that was chained up. One summer, thinking his fox would be happier if allowed his liberty, he released him, but with a short piece of chain attached to his collar. He, however, soon made serious havock among some fancy poultry. Incensed at such ingratitude, my friend was resolved on the destruction of the depredator, and, knowing his haunts, released the hounds from the kennel, and followed them on foot. They soon found the culprit, who broke covert in due form, the pack after him in full cry. They had not proceeded far before the harmonious concert ceased, and their huntsman was preparing to give a who-hoop, when, to his utter astonishment, he observed the hounds returning to him with the fox in the midst of them, waving his brush, unhurt, and all appearing on the most social terms; upon which he secured the caitiff, and had him again chained up, where he remained for several years.

A singular coincidence has been communicated to me of a fox which was disturbed in one of the Earl Fitzhardinge's coverts during the shooting season of 1852. A party of his lordship's guests were beating a small covert; and the game having been driven to the extremity, the Hon. Craven Berkeley heard a hare cry out. No one having fired at that moment, and there not being any dog near, curiosity was excited, and close to the

spot a fox was viewed, which had evidently committed the outrage. There the hare lay dead. What could have instigated him to commit such an act must remain a mystery. Whether he thought he was bound, in honour to his aristocratic visitors and patrons, to join them in their sport, and contribute his quota to their list of "killed"—whether a sudden impulse of anger, fear, or hunger prompted him, it is impossible to conceive. Although he was surrounded by his best friends, he might have anticipated danger, and therefore snapped at the hare as she was passing; but, whatever motive induced him to do it, it was certainly a most extraordinary proceeding.

Seeing how much the nature of foxes is regulated by their mode of living, it becomes a matter of interest to inquire to what extent those habits may be cultivated so as to insure sport. To effect this, I am quite of opinion that, if all the breeding earths were to be broken up, foxes would be wilder and stouter. There are, I am aware, many masters of hounds who are opposed to this course from reasons which I will explain. There is, however, a medium practice, which might be resorted to, probably, with benefit; namely, that of stopping the main earths as soon as hunting commences, and of keeping them stopped till the vixens are about to lay up their cubs. I believe Mr. T. Smith was the first to propose this plan, and

likewise to put it in operation; and the success which attended him as a master of hounds during the number of years which he hunted the Craven, the Hambledon, and other countries, is a guarantee for the soundness of his doctrines. The custom has been adopted also in the Vine Hunt and other parts of Hampshire. With reference to the plan of destroying all the main earths, I must observe that in the Oakley country the foxes are all "stub-bred ones," which I know from the authority of two gentlemen who hunted that country, both of whom agree that they are uncommonly stout, and "take a great deal of killing." If foxes breed and thrive above ground in one country, they will do so in another; and many advantages would arise from the system. In the first place, fox-stealers would not be so readily enabled to get at the cubs, because they would experience difficulty in finding them after they have attained an age when they are capable of feeding themselves; and it would be useless to take them before that time, when the object is to transport them into another country. Fortunately the day has gone by when persons would desire to take them for the purpose of absolute destruction. The fox-stealing fraternity would never accomplish the capture of a half-grown, or an old stub-bred fox. It is only when they go to ground that the devices of those marauders can, with facility, be put into

effect. An event occurred a few years since, when I was residing in Hampshire, the details of which are worth mentioning, because they go very far to show the advantages which would arise from the adoption of my recommendation. A vixen fox had laid up her cubs in an earth on the banks of a chalk-pit, and one day in the spring, seeing a very notorious fox-stealer lurking about, I immediately communicated with the keeper, who caused the vixen to remove her cubs by burning some tar and brimstone-matches at the mouth of the earth; she took them to a neighbouring covert, and brought them up on a stub, and they afforded some good runs when they were sufficiently old enough. To have dug them out would have been impossible, from the nature of the earth; but the vulpicide in question practised a far more cunning and systematic device. He had a small female terrier which he had taught to go into the earths and bring out the cubs one at a time in her mouth, and she would perform it with the utmost tenderness; a plan by far more dexterous and destructive than that of digging, from two causes. In the first place, if a fox-stealer resorts to digging, it necessarily occupies some time, during which he may be detected; and although the laws are not very severe on such occasions, he may be punished for trespass, a penalty which he will not willingly incur. In the next place, he cannot

do it without disturbing the soil, which leaves indubitable evidence that some depredation has been committed. But with the terrier trained to the performance, a whole country may be robbed, and no discovery made till cub-hunting commences. The operation is performed in a few minutes.

Regarding the fact of having caused the vixen to remove her cubs as equivalent to breaking up or stopping the earth, I will now proceed to illustrate two striking events connected with the noble science: one bearing on the practice which I am now advocating; the other, on what hounds can do if not pressed upon by horsemen or interfered with by a huntsman. On the 15th of February, 1851, the Vine hounds met at Monk's Sherbourne, and drew Mr. Holton's coverts, the resort of the cubs which had been removed from the earth in question. They very quickly found, and with a good scent went away with little or no cry. It was a foggy morning, and none of the field were aware for some little time that they had found, much less that they had gone away; missing the hounds, however, it was soon discovered they had slipped off silently by themselves, pointing for Ramsdell, leaving that hamlet on the right, to Skyres, when they ran in the direction of Ewhurst Park, but skirting the coverts, went straight through the Deans Wood,

and on gaining the open, the hounds ran into and killed their fox. The run occupied thirty-five minutes, but not one of the field saw anything of the hounds till they had passed Ramsdell, and were never able to get near them till they reached the Deans Wood, immediately after which he was killed. This was only a young fox of the preceding season, he was one of those which had been disturbed from the earths, and I had often seen him. He was a good wild specimen of the vulpine fraternity; there was no disposition in him to run the chain of woodlands which prevail in the neighbourhood, the usual propensity of the foxes generally which are bred there. The moment he was found he faced the open, skirted the Ewhurst coverts, and ran through Deans Wood, more probably because it happened to be in his line, than from any knowledge of its locality, for it contains earths which he never tried. Although there are some impediments to first-rate sport in the Vine country, in consequence of the interminable woodlands and hedgerows in one part, and the bad-scenting properties of the other, it abounds in wild, stout-running foxes, which may be attributed in a great measure to the custom of finally closing the earths when hunting commences. When the earths are closed at the commencement of the season, the danger of stopping foxes under ground is entirely obviated, and I have no doubt it is not

an unfrequent occurrence. If the weather be rough and unfavourable, foxes will not always, unless pressed by hunger, leave their earths at all; and if they do, are very apt to return as expeditiously as possible after having procured their food.

With regard to breaking up the earths entirely, the plan appears to possess many recommendations; it would save a vast deal of trouble in earth-stopping; and as the propensities of foxes, like those of other animals, are controlled by habit, those which are bred above ground would not run to earth when pressed by hounds so frequently as those which have been accustomed to seek repose and safety in such asylums. A fox bred in an earth resorts to such places when disturbed; he has found repose there and seeks it in the moment of danger; it becomes his habit. After his nocturnal rambles in search of food, he returns to his natural dormitory, though it may not be the identical place in which he was born. Foxes that are accustomed to this "life below stairs" instinctively fly to those asylums when chased by hounds; they find a barrier opposed to their entrance, but if the scent be not good, and the underwood is thick, they will often hang in covert, in a great measure attracted by the earths, which they scarcely fail to visit every time they pass by them. At length becoming weary, they

enter some rabbit hole, or drain, sufficiently spacious to receive them. The objections which I have heard against this plan are that it would cause the foxes to leave the coverts where it was practised, and take themselves off to those of a neighbouring hunt. In the first place, I do not think it would have that effect to any extent, and that objection would be obviated if the adjoining hunt would adopt a similar course.

Masters of hounds are usually desirous to promote the sport of their neighbours, especially if, by so doing, they can augment their own: the jealousy which existed in former days is exploded. Those who are most intimately acquainted with the habits of the fox are aware that breaking up, or finally closing the earths, will not cause the foxes to leave their accustomed woodlands if they be kept quiet. It is when they are disturbed by rabbit shooters and cur dogs at the commencement of the breeding season, that they will seek repose in more peaceful quarters. The difference in point of stoutness, stamina, and wildness between stub-bred foxes and those which are half-domesticated, is well known, and any master of hounds would not, I conceive, hesitate in making the election with which he would prefer to have his country stocked. Even if they were not so numerous, thirty brace of good wild, flying foxes would afford more sport than treble the number of

bad ones. In case that cordial arrangement could not be effected, if the main earths were to be broken up in the centre of the country, it would soon be decided if the practice were good or not, and in that case there would be no risk of driving them into another hunt. It has been contended that foxes so treated would die from want of shelter, and that the cubs while very young would be liable to fall victims to hawks and other birds of prey; on the latter point not so much so as the young leverets; and on the other, when it is observed that in the Oakley country they are all stub bred, and in other countries they are partially so, that objection is confuted. I must now quote a few lines from that great authority on hunting, Beckford, who, it will be seen, had an idea of the plan which I have been advocating. He says:—

"I am not certain that earths are the safest places for foxes to breed in; for frequently, when poachers cannot dig them, they will catch the young foxes in trenches dug at the mouth of the hole, which I believe they call 'tunning' them."

An objection to breaking up the earths has been pointed out to me as relates to the fees to keepers, that if there were no earths to stop, and consequently no fees for doing so, the keepers, feeling less interest in the preservation of foxes, would be still greater enemies to them; but that

difficulty is very easily overcome by a custom adopted in some countries, of paying the keepers a certain sum every hunting day on which a fox is found in the coverts of which they have the care, a portion of that sum being reserved in case a fox goes to ground in an earth which they have neglected to stop.

Before I conclude this chapter on the habits of the vulpine race, it is necessary to introduce the subject of coverts. When our forefathers first began to hunt the fox, they no doubt confined their operations to the large woods and rocky cliffs, the original and, I may add, natural places of resort of the vulpine race. In wild, uncultivated districts a species of gorse springs up, generally on the sides or summits of hills; it appears to be indigenous to the soil. Those situations may likewise be included as having afforded amusement to our worthy ancestors. It may be very readily understood that when the large woodlands had been frequently routed, the foxes took to the smaller coverts which then existed, formed both by nature and art, such as are known by the names of gullies, dingles, spinnies, coppices, and brakes, hollows, or bottoms, generally acknowledged as "fox-ground." At the same time, it may be observed, there are some particular spots which those animals do not appear to patronise; for I have known some "very likely

places" where foxes never lie, and very seldom, if ever, run through them. As foxes became dispersed, it was found more agreeable to hunt them over the open plains than through the woodlands, especially by those who were ambitious to exhibit their equestrian prowess; and to encourage the foxes to frequent smaller coverts from whence each horseman had an equal chance of "a fair start," followed as a matter of course. For this purpose, artificial gorse coverts were formed, independently of coppices and plantations, for the treble purpose of preserving game and foxes, and of converting rough unfertile spots, unfavourable to agriculture, into profit by growing coppice wood and plantation timber. Whether the prevalence of gorse coverts in some of the most fashionable countries, especially in Leicestershire and Northamptonshire, is conducive to sport of the highest class, is rather questionable; but it appears that the public taste is better pleased with a fifteen or twenty minutes' burst without a check, or any impediment to call forth the talent of the huntsman or the exquisite hunting faculties of the hounds, than with a longer run of five-and-forty minutes' or an hour's duration. From the time of Mr. Meynell to the present, Charnwood Forest has been the stronghold of the vulpine family affecting Leicestershire, though I have no doubt it is very materially changed to what it

was formerly. The Pytchley country, perhaps, may be ranked first as possessing the most important woodlands in England, which includes Rockingham Forest, where they frequently hunt till very late in the season; and my memory deceives me if I have not heard of some master of hounds who actually hunted throughout one summer. The principal woodlands in Warwickshire are in the northern division of the country situated between Warwick and Coleshill, extending to Meriden. With intervals of heavy-ploughed land, they are extensive, and hold a good scent, and when regularly hunted, the foxes have been notorious for their stoutness; but there have been several periods during which no hounds have been kept; and where that has been the case, foxes are in general destroyed by unsportsmanlike means.

Wychwood Forest, in the Heythrope country, is very extensive; it is in length about seven miles, and nearly four in breadth, intersected with numerous rides and some roads. For the purpose of a nursery for foxes, it is invaluable and is an excellent arena both for cub-hunting and hunting in the spring of the year, when the young crops and the nature of the coverts render it imprudent to continue the sport in the open. Capps' Lodge, Chadlington Gate, Cornbury Park, Fair Spear, Potter's Lodge, Ringwood Oak, and White Oak

Green, otherwise Wittey Green, are the principal places of meeting in the forest. Foxes found at Bruern, Tangley, Westwell and Bradwell Grove, will often run direct to Wychwood, and a more splendid country to cross cannot be desired.

In the Duke of Beaufort's country, the Lower Woods are the most important. Though by no means so expansive as Wychwood Forest, they are a favourite rendezvous of the vulpine race. In a wet season such as that of 1852 and 1853, the rides are awfully deep, and lost shoes and occasionally loose horses are the results. By the excellent management for which the duke's hounds are signalised, these woods are constantly hunted; therefore the foxes are wild, and very frequently afford good runs. It is not an uncommon occurrence to find a fox in the Lower Woods whose line is up Hawkesbury Hill (a choaker at the commencement) to Bodkin Hazles, Swangrove, across Badminton Park, and if the hounds do not previously taste him, his point is Sopworth, Sherston, and perhaps Pinkney Park. There is also a considerable tract of hilly woodlands about Kilcot, Boxwell, Alderley, and Newark Park, well stocked with foxes.

Earl Fitzhardinge's Berkeley country has a considerable portion of woodland, although none of the coverts are individually very extensive. The principal ones are those on the line of hills

between Dursley and Wotton-under-Edge, extending to Stinchcombe and Westridge in one direction, and towards Kingscote in the other, where they are bounded by the Duke of Beaufort's country already mentioned, Kilcot, Boxwell, and Alderley. His lordship has also a fine preserve for foxes and game in Michaelwood; in fact it is unnecessary to state that his lordship's estate is well stocked with the requisites for sports of all kinds. In the Cheltenham country the strongest woodlands are the Chedworth, Withington and Star Woods, all of which are close together. The Guiting Woods are likewise of considerable magnitude.

Although Shropshire may be fairly denominated a woodland country, it does not contain any woods of great size; but they are numerous in many parts, and so far prejudicial to first-rate sport, and many of them are very strong — consequently hounds experience great difficulty in driving the foxes through them. In the Albrighton Hunt the Areley Woods are the most considerable, and lie on the north-western bank of the Severn. The Ran Dans, which are in Worcestershire, and neutral with the two hunts, are as strong as any I ever saw. The latter country, in its general character, is similar to Shropshire; but in parts of it there is more grass. There is a large extent of woodland bordering on the two counties, called

Bewdley Forest, and, though not preserved, is a very favourite resort of foxes. It has not been hunted by any hounds for the last thirty years, although it is admirably adapted for cub-hunting. I once suggested this to a late master of the Worcestershire, who was horrified at the idea, exclaiming if he were to take his hounds there, he should never expect to see them again.

CHAP. VI.

Fame of Leicestershire. — Mr. Meynell. — Langton Hall. — Purchase of Quorndon Hall. — Removal of the Hounds. — Entering to Hare. — Objections thereto. — Self-hunting at Walks. — Distinction between Self-hunting and Entering to Hare. — Mr. Meynell's hundred Couples of Hounds in the Field. — Somervile's Advice. — Colonel Cook's Remarks concerning the Discipline of Mr. Meynell's Hounds — Average of Foxes killed by Mr. Meynell's Hounds. — Average of Foxes killed by Sir R. Sutton's Hounds. — Comparative Sport. — Custom of taking the Hounds from Home. — Character of Mr. Meynell; his favourite Stomachic. — The late Mr. Lockley. — Curious Coincidence. — Oliver Cromwell and Charles the Second. — Mr. Lockley's energetic Habits. — Two Days' Sport in one. — Mr. Lockley as a Rider to Hounds; his impressive Admonitions. — Mr. Lockley's Death; his Appreciation of Sporting Terms. — The Dogs. — The Meet. — Mr. Lockley's Message to a Master of Hounds. — Anticipating a Check. — The late Lord Sefton; his Lordship's Conveyance to the Covert-side. — Second Horses introduced. — Advantages derived from the Custom. — A fresh Horse. — Lord Sefton's two Packs of Hounds and two Huntsmen. — The late Lord Foley. — Mr. T. A. Smith. — The first Gentleman who hunted his own Hounds in Leicestershire. — Mr. T. A. Smith's Notion of a practicable Fence: his numerous Falls. — The Art of Falling. — Mr. Osbaldeston; his sporting Accomplishments. — Sir Bellingham Graham. — Mr. Osbaldeston's second Occupation of the Quorn Country. — Youthful Reminiscences. — First Trip to Melton. — Arrival at Melton. — The Pleasures of Anticipation. — Anticipated Notions. — Mr. Osbaldeston as a Huntsman; his Hounds and Horses. — Drawing the Coverts. — A Find in Shangton Holt. — A five-and-twenty Minutes' Scurry. — Mr. Osbal-

deston's Talent in breeding Hounds. — Feeding. — The Furrier Blood. — Quickness in Chase. — Prevailing Taste. — Pace in Favour. — The Squire's Maxim. — Hunting Runs at a Discount. — Going from Covert to Covert. — Mr. Osbaldeston's Popularity. — The Squire's Exclamation when his Hounds outpaced the Horses. — Lord Southampton; his Lordship's Hounds. — Kennels at Leicester. — The late Sir Harry Goodricke; his Hounds. — Kennels at Thrussington. — Mr. Holyoake. — Sir Francis Holyoake Goodricke. — Mr. Errington. — Lord Suffield. — Fallacy of Human Expectations. — Purchase of the Lambton Hounds. — Disappointment. — Kennels at Bildeston. — Mr. Hodgson; his Hounds. — An Anecdote of Mr. Hodgson. — Mr. Greene. — Numerous Changes. — Sir Richard Sutton. — Reunion of the Donnington Country. — Alteration in the Country. — Improvement in Agriculture. — Alteration in the Fences. — The present Character of the Fences. — Brooks. — Ridge and Furrow distressing to Horses. — Crossing Ridge and Furrow. — Dick Knight and the Canals. — Railways in Leicestershire; the Accommodation they afford. — Sir Richard Sutton's and Lord Cardigan's Ride to Covert by Rail. — Boundaries of the Country.

THE pre-eminence which Leicestershire has acquired, as the great and fashionable arena of fox-hunting, may be ascribed to three causes; the nature of the country being peculiarly adapted to the purpose; the *eclat* which the late Mr. Meynell established at an early date, when "the science" was in a crude state; and the lustre subsequently shed over it by many of that talented fox-hunter's successors.

Mr. Meynell hunted the Quorn country about five and forty years, commencing soon after the

termination of the first half of the last century, and continuing till the first or second year in the present. It was, of course, long before my time; but having for many years enjoyed the friendship of one of his grandsons, and also of the late Mr. John Lockley, a contemporary of Mr. Meynell's, I am indebted to them for many interesting facts and circumstances connected with the chase at the period when elegance and refinement first shed their influential rays upon it. When Mr. Meynell first entered upon Leicestershire, he resided with Mr. Boothby, who contributed towards the expenses, at Langton Hall, and the hounds were kept at Great Bowden Inn, which, although in Leicestershire, is quite on the confines, bordering on Northamptonshire; and I believe he hunted part of what is now the Pytchley country. He subsequently purchased Quorndon Hall from the Earl Ferrers, which had been previously occupied as a club, and to which many of the most fashionable men of the day belonged. On removing the establishment to that place, they were designated the Quorn hounds. One of the peculiarities of Mr. Meynell's system was that of entering his young hounds at hare, a custom exploded in all kennels of the present day. I have reason to believe his motive for doing so was because many contemporary packs hunted both hare and fox, a custom which experience proves to

be incompatible with the perfection of steadiness. Another motive was that of teaching hounds to hunt, or, in kennel language, "to enter." Although inconvenient, it was, perhaps, less objectionable at that time than it would be now, because hares were by no means so numerous; but, under any circumstances, it cannot be surprising that hounds should have a predilection for the pursuit of an animal they had been first encouraged to hunt, and that great severity must be exercised before the poor hounds could be made steady to the proper scent. If hares abound in the neighbourhood where young hounds are reared, they will very probably amuse themselves with a little independent hunting on their own account; to which there is no objection, probably the reverse: it teaches them to hunt, the purpose for which they are bred and kept; therefore, it is highly desirable they should be proficients in the accomplishment. It is a very different affair when they take to it from the natural impulse of instinct, and, being encouraged to hunt a scent one day, and chastised for doing so the next. As young hounds are now treated, by taking them to exercise among hares, and checking them when they show a disposition to chase the timids, they are rendered steady without punishment. When cub-hunting commences, those hounds are generally found to enter more readily which have

indulged in a little self-hunting after hares when at their walks.

Mr. Meynell was an advocate for taking out an immense number of hounds, and would have as many as one hundred couples in the field. Evidently he did not value the advice given by Somervile, who says,

> "Here must th' instructive Muse (but with respect)
> Censure that numerous pack, that crowd of state,
> With which the vain profusion of the great
> Covers the lawn, and shakes the trembling copse.
> Pompous encumbrance! a magnificence
> Useless, vexatious! For the wily fox,
> Safe in th' increasing number of his foes,
> Kens well the great advantage; slinks behind
> And slily creeps through the same beaten track,
> And hunts them step by step; then views, escap'd,
> With inward ecstasy, the panting throng
> In their own footsteps puzzled, foil'd and lost."

The extraordinary command, or rather subjection under which Mr. Meynell's hounds were disciplined, will be gleaned from an anecdote related of them by Colonel Cook. In his "Observations on Hunting," he mentions "the circumstance of Mr. Meynell's hounds waiting in the same field, while a few couples selected from the pack were running hard in an adjoining gorse, nor did they attempt to break from the whipper-in until cheered to the cry by Jack Raven." The plan of selecting a few couples of hounds to draw the gorse was, no doubt,

adopted in order to avoid the danger of chopping the fox in covert, an event very likely to happen with such a numerous phalanx as one hundred couples of hounds. I also remember having heard Mr. Lockley mention similar instances of the subjection under which they were managed, but he thoroughly exonerated both the master and the huntsman from any acts of severity. The steadiness and docility of the hounds were manifested on all occasions. They hunted three days in the week, and the average number of foxes which they killed throughout a season, was about thirty-six brace; but then it must be remembered the country was of far greater extent than at the present time, as it then included the Donnington.

Since Sir Richard Sutton has hunted the Quorn country, the average number of foxes killed annually has been about forty-six brace, besides many which have been marked to ground and left, for they seldom dig a fox out after the regular hunting commences.

As Mr. Meynell hunted only three days in the week, and Sir Richard Sutton hunts six, it appears there were a greater number of foxes killed in the "olden times," in proportion to the number of hunting days. On the other hand, it must be remembered that the country was nearly, if not quite, double the present extent. Neither is the number of foxes killed a criterion of sport.

It was the custom with Mr. Meynell to have the hounds taken the night before hunting, to the immediate vicinity of the coverts which they were to draw on the following day, even if the distance did not exceed a few miles. This was of course done with a view of having them fresh to commence their work, but it must have been a mistaken idea; for it is quite certain, neither man, horse, nor hound, reposes so comfortably as in the bed, stall, or kennel to which he is accustomed.

The good taste which Mr. Meynell displayed in other affairs, besides those of the chase, led him into the best society of the day; the man of fashion being combined with the sportsman must have assisted most materially in stamping upon the "Noble Science" that distinction with which he impressed it. He has been represented as having been the beau ideal of society, if such a term can be used individually; and his courteous yet enthusiastic manner in the field gave him a command which few masters of hounds ever enjoyed. Moreover, there were not so many horsemen, neither were any of the promiscuous class to interfere with the working details of the chase. In the selection of a stomachic, cordial, restorative, tonic, or by whatever term he might have been pleased to describe it, his choice was certainly singular. Some gentlemen go forth into the hunting field provided with small flasks of sherry,

curaçoa, cherry brandy, or similar spirituous compounds; but it was Mr. Meynell's pleasure to take none of those; a small dose of tincture of rhubarb supplied the place of more stimulating, and to most palates more agreeable, restoratives. How the constant use of the draught might have the effect of rendering the constitution less susceptible of its properties I will not presume to state, but it was such a one that few persons could indulge in without experiencing some inconvenience.

As a very constant attendant at the covert-side with Mr. Meynell's hounds, I have already mentioned the name of Mr. Lockley; and I cannot pass him over without some further notice, for as a sportsman of the old school he was justly celebrated; perhaps more as a rider to hounds than for his judgment in hunting. This veteran sportsman was born at Barton Hall, in the county of Derby, in the year 1750. It is somewhat remarkable that the house in which he was born was at one time the residence of Oliver Cromwell, and that Mr. Lockley subsequently resided at Boscobel House in Staffordshire, renowned in history as the refuge of King Charles II. after the battle of Worcester. The places in which the king was concealed were carefully preserved when Mr. Lockley resided there, but most of the other parts of the house were altered. In a field adjoining the garden stands the royal oak, raised from an acorn of the

original oak in which the king found shelter; and I believe all these relics are still kept in order. Mr. Lockley may be said to have passed more than half his life-time on horseback. He was a very early riser, and no sooner had he taken his breakfast than he mounted his horse, if in the winter, to ride to covert; in summer, either to go on a journey, call on his friends, or inspect his farming—a pursuit which he followed at Boscobel, and subsequently near Pershore, where he resided during the last ten or twelve years of his life, although it is to be regretted agriculture was not to him a profitable speculation. At the time he lived at Boscobel he hunted with Lord Talbot's hounds in the neighbourhood of Cannock Chase, Rugeley, Lichfield, and parts adjacent, which were often within reach of his own house; Lord Vernon's, in the Sudbury, and what is now called the Atherstone country; Mr. Corbet's, in Warwickshire, and, as before stated, with Mr. Meynell's. He has often told me of a great day's sport he once enjoyed with two packs of hounds, somewhere about the year 1790; and little did I think at the time I should ever attempt to narrate his anecdotes, otherwise I should have treasured them more carefully in the form of memorandums. My memory does not serve me with minute particulars; but he always commenced the tale with, "We breakfasted at twelve o'clock."

Mr. Hawkes, of Snitterfield, his contemporary and intimate friend, a gentleman equally celebrated as himself, was his companion. They met Lord Talbot's hounds, to begin with, at a very early hour, which implied the necessity for breaking their fast at midnight. They saw a capital run with those hounds, and then went on to meet Mr. Meynell's, who threw off later in the day. They had also an excellent run with them, and the tale was concluded with the declaration that "it was twelve o'clock at night before they retired to rest." It must have been a very severe day for them and their horses; of course they had fresh hunters for the second pack; but it was not the fashion in those days to have second horses in the field.

As a rider to hounds, Mr. Lockley was very superior, and his great experience rendered him a valuable acquaintance to a young beginner. An admonition which he once gave me I have never forgotten. We were hunting with Lord Lichfield's, then Lord Anson's, hounds, in the Atherstone country, and, in the run, my horse fell at a fence. When I got on him again, thinking he had been somewhat careless, I drove the spurs into him, which Lockley remarking, said, "Never punish your horse *after* he is over his fence; it is the most likely thing in the world to cause him to refuse; besides which," added he,

"people in this country will think you never had a fall before." The latter part of his counsel made some impression, the former a great deal. When hunting in the Albrighton country, then under the management of Mr. Boycott, and riding a horse belonging to Mr. William Grazebrooke, poor Lockley had a bad fall, from the effects of which he never recovered; and he breathed his last at that gentleman's house. This happened, if my calculations are correct, in the spring of 1827; consequently he had nearly attained the patriarchal age of eighty years. If his activity had failed him, his pluck had not; for a very few seasons before the accident occurred which terminated so fatally, he had distinguished himself in the three best runs of the year—in Leicestershire, Warwickshire, and Shropshire.

Without presuming to be an accomplished scholar, Mr. Lockley was "well up" in sporting language, and always appeared annoyed when he heard it mutilated. He had a great and proper aversion to hear a hound called a *dog*, and used to say it was an insult to the highest-bred and most sagacious of our domestic animals, synonymous with *snob* as applied to the human race; and invariably included any person who made use of the term in the category of the synonyme. During the latter period of his life the word "meet" came into use, as designating the ap-

pointment or place of meeting of hounds, to which he had an equal dislike. I remember a juvenile sportsman saying to him one day, when out hunting, "Where is the meet to-morrow?" Upon which he replied, "There will be a leg of mutton on my table to-morrow at six o'clock, if that is what you mean, and I shall be happy if you will come and partake of it." So far he was right, for the word is not to be found as a substantive in our language upon the authority of the dictionaries; it has been coined for the purpose, and custom has brought it into use as a common term; nevertheless, it is not a correct one, or an elegant mode of expression. With young beginners, if intimately acquainted, he was very kind in giving them hints and advice — teaching them how they should go in a manner peculiar to himself; and if sometimes they were mixed up with a slight degree of sarcasm, as in the latter instance, they were well meant and impressive. His great experience and age entitled him to some latitude of expression, and he was sincere in his motives. For one, I feel much indebted to him, and often regret not having followed his injunctions more implicitly. It would have saved me many misadventures and many five-pound notes; but, unfortunately, it is too often the case in our youthful days that we slight the admonitions of our best-experienced Mentors, and in no walk of

life is good counsel of greater importance than in the sporting world. From Mr. Lockley's experience, observant habits, and devotion to fox-hunting, his maxims were worthy of attention. I recollect a message he sent by me to Mr. Boycott, when that gentleman first began to hunt the Albrighton country. When he commenced, he killed several cubs and some old foxes with rather an unrelenting hand, which reached Lockley's ears. "Give my compliments to Mr. Boycott," said he, "and tell him not to be too fond of killing his foxes down. It is as necessary for sport to have a stock of foxes in condition, and acquainted with the country, as it is to have hounds and horses in condition." When riding to hounds he was particularly careful to avoid pressing upon them. "Anticipating a check," as he called it, "was a necessary caution with every man who desired to ride like a sportsman." By this he meant taking notice if there was anything, such as a flock of sheep, herd of cattle, teams at plough, or labourer at work in the line, calculated to head the fox and occasion a check. There are many gentlemen of the present day who would profit greatly by this hint.

The successor to Mr. Meynell was the late Earl of Sefton. The magnificence and style which his lordship introduced far exceeded anything of the kind heretofore heard of in the fox-hunting world. At all events, it was introduced

in a different light, in accordance with the fashion of the day; of which, it is almost needless to add, the noble earl was the magnet and the polar star. Driving four-in-hand was in great vogue, and his lordship was a professor of the art. It was not, therefore, an unusual thing to see Lord Sefton's splendid team, as well as those of several other noblemen and gentlemen, at the place of meeting when available for wheels. Being a heavy weight, his lordship introduced the fashion, which has subsequently become prevalent, of having a second horse in the field; and it is a custom which cannot be too strongly advocated, effecting, in the long run, a great saving of horse-flesh. Masters of hounds will always find it conducive to economy to have second horses for themselves and their servants. When a horse is tired down, jaded, he requires some time to recover, and may often not be fit to ride again under nine or ten days; at all events, not under a week: but a horse that has only had moderate duty to perform, will come out again in four or five days, and will go through a season more satisfactorily than one which is ridden till he is tired, if it be only once in a fortnight. Those who only keep small studs may say they cannot do it. With three horses a man may desire to hunt four days in the week, which, barring accidents, he may do, provided, also, that they are of mature age, in first-

rate condition, and carefully ridden. Even with that small stud, when the hounds meet near home, it will be most desirable to have two horses out; but not exactly upon the system generally adopted with second horses, which implies, that the second horse goes to the place of meeting, and is kept out the day through. The plan which is now frequently adopted in such cases, is to have a fresh horse brought to an appointed place, where the hounds are expected to draw, about two o'clock, and to exchange the one that has been ridden up to that time. It is thus very little more than exercise for either. Of course, it may sometimes happen that the hounds find early, and run in a contrary direction to where the fresh horse has been ordered to go; but the line of country usually drawn from certain places of meeting is pretty generally known, and, therefore, it will not often occur that the fresh horse cannot be found. Moreover, it will occasionally happen that a second horse, although out all day, is not to be met with when wanted, in the event of a run with a straight-going fox.

Lord Sefton was the first, and I believe the only master of hounds who had not only two packs, but also two huntsmen—John Raven, who occupied that appointment to Mr. Meynell, and Stephen Goodall. In fact his lordship was, from what I can learn, perfectly liberal in everything

conducive to sport, or in any way calculated to add *éclat* to fox-hunting, but did not continue very long at the head of affairs. In 1810 his lordship sold Quorndon Hall, which he had purchased from Mr. Meynell, with all its appurtenances, to the late Lord Foley, who was also a distinguished friend and contemporary of Mr. Meynell. This last nobleman's career as a master of hounds in Leicestershire was very short; other amusements at that time rising in the estimation of many of the wealthy fashionables of the day unfortunately attracted his lordship from the chase, and Mr. Thomas Assheton Smith made his *début* in 1812. That gentleman's name and high reputation as a sportsman are so well-known in fox-hunting circles, that any eulogiums from me would be superfluous. I must, however, observe that he was the first gentleman who essayed to hunt his own hounds in the far-famed Quorn country, and moreover, that it was his first appearance in that character in any country. It was a bold attempt undoubtedly, but that was always a distinguishing feature throughout his life. His idea of the practicability of a fence was, that it could be got over with a fall; his object was to be in the same field with his hounds, at any risk. And it has been asserted that his falls averaged something like one hundred during a season; yet I believe he never sustained very serious injuries in the way

of broken limbs, though doubtless he must have received many very hard blows. This proves two facts, Mr. Assheton Smith's superiority as a horseman, and perfect coolness in the time of danger. If an inferior horseman happens to meet with one awkward fall, he is almost certain to sustain some damage, more particularly if his nerve is deficient. In fact, the art of falling may be considered as forming part of the science of equestrianism necessary to a man who rides with hounds.

In 1817, Mr. Assheton Smith transferred his title to the possession of Quorndon Hall and the country to Mr. Osbaldeston, a gentleman whose sporting exploits of all kinds are generally known throughout all the civilised districts of the globe. At one period of his life he would have challenged any mortal breathing to a diversity of achievements; in fact he did so, but there was no response. There were very few men who could compete with him in individual enterprises; but it was not till some years had elapsed, after his first appearance in Leicestershire as a master of hounds, that he distinguished himself in the various accomplishments of shooting, cricketing, steeplechasing, race riding, *cum multis aliis*. However, I must not get off the line to describe them.

About the middle of the season of 1821, Mr. Osbaldeston sold the greater portion of his hounds,

horses, and the establishment at Quorn to Sir Bellingham Graham, who at that time had just commenced hunting the Hambledon country in Hampshire, where Mr. Osbaldeston succeeded the baronet, who only remained in Leicestershire one clear season afterwards. The Hambledon country was by no means consonant with Mr. Osbaldeston's taste or talent as a huntsman. It was more suitable to one of the old school, by whom brilliant bursts, distinguished for pace, were not held in so much estimation as hunting runs; and in 1823 "The Squire," as he was termed by his friends, returned to his old quarters at Quorndon Hall, and Sir Bellingham Graham went into what is now called the Albrighton country. Mr. Osbaldeston then undertook the arduous post of hunting his own hounds. On the previous one Tom Sebright officiated; Dick Burton was the first whip to Mr. Osbaldeston, until he met with a severe accident, when his place was occupied by the equally well-known Jack Stevens, assisted by James Shirley; and two more efficient whippers-in never turned hounds to their huntsman's horn.

With what pleasure do we retrace our lives to the period of our youthful days, and what a happy circumstance it is that we retain more vivid recollection of subjects which afford us delight than of those which create vexation! Thus we refer to by-gone days with considerable satisfaction,

and compare them with the present as having been more profuse of prosperity and social happiness. This is not an unaccountable feeling considering that youth is the stage of our existence when we are most susceptible to the impressions of joy, ere we have encountered the deceits of mankind, the stratagems of malevolence and the vicissitudes of fortune; ere we have gained knowledge by experience, and are more capable of detecting imperfections, which being discovered detract something from the enjoyment of pursuits with which they may be connected. Highly elated was I when I first contemplated a visit to the Elysian Fields of Leicestershire. It was at Christmas, 1826, I made an engagement with a neighbouring friend, a junior relative of Mr. Lockley's, to join our forces, and take a trip to Melton. Not wishing to incur unnecessary expenses, our arrangements were made in this fashion. My friend had three hunters, and he undertook to drive me to Melton in his buggy, which was likewise to be our mode of conveyance to covert, when the place of meeting admitted of that mode of travelling. He sent his valet, who officiated for both of us, and one man with his horses. My stud consisted of four hunters and a hack; with which I sent my groom, a helper, and boy to take our horses to covert, and the servants assisted each other in the duties of the stable. We set off

on the third of February, and after paying a visit to a friend on the road, reached Melton about mid-day on Sunday, when we took up our quarters at the well-known and well-conducted hotel, the George; the horses and servants were quartered at the Harborough Arms, twenty-six shillings per horse being the charge for stabling and all necessary provender. On our arrival, we found the fixtures rather unpropitious. The following day, the Duke of Rutland's, Lord Lonsdale's, and the Quorn were too far off to admit of our hunting with either without sending our horses on, and we arrived too late for that, consequently had to amuse ourselves in the best way we could, although there was not such a thing as a public billiard table in the town. But on the Tuesday, the Quorn hounds met at Rollestone.

Anticipating any event upon which great interest is centred, it is a very common thing to form a sort of picture in the mind of the *tout ensemble* and the details. It is a natural conclusion that I had done so on this occasion, and as my experience in hunting had been confined to the provincials, and my knowledge of the noble science but limited, it is an equally natural conclusion that my ideas turned upon superficial objects. Although so many years have elapsed, I have still the most lively recollections both of ideas and realities. Of course, I had heard of Mr. Osbaldes-

ton's fame — of that of his hounds, his horses, and of the country. I imagined that in the person of "The Squire," I should see a man of the highest fashion "got up" most elaborately, and with some little affectation, and that on any occasion of his hounds being pressed upon, he would be outrageous. Of the hounds I had formed a tolerably correct estimate; of the horses, I expected to have seen everything delightful to the eye; with respect to appearance — I may say beauty — on that I had formed an erroneous conclusion. Touching the whipper-ins, I had pictured them smart in the extreme; and of the country, that it abounded in double posts and rails, fences of impracticable magnitude, and brooks innumerable. Having indulged in this little dream, and discoursed to my friend, who, like myself, was a novice in the country, on the probabilities of what we should find, we arrived at the appointed place, and I will now proceed to give some description of the realities. Instead of finding Mr. Osbaldeston what I had fancied, I found him attired in precisely what a master of hounds ought to be; that is clad in what is necessary to comfort and convenience, without any superfluous attempts at "effect," and although hats were the fashion of the day for gentlemen, he wore a cap similar to those of the men; an unassuming single-breasted coat, white cords, with top-boots, neither peculiar for their whiteness or

any eccentricity of shade, comprised the Squire's costume. Of the hounds, they certainly exhibited everything, and more than what I had anticipated, much as I had heard in their praise, and perfect as I expected them to be. The whipper-ins, neat and clean, but everything apparently selected with an eye to business, for they were not half so smart as some which I had recently seen in a provincial country. The horses nearly thoroughbred, but certainly chosen more for their intrinsic goodness than appearance; in fact, had they been offered singly for sale in a fair, they would not at dealer's valuation have realised five and thirty pounds a piece, though, from their known good qualities, they would have commanded long prices at Tattersall's, where scratches and scars from stubs and briers, or blows from stakes, are not much heeded.

I could not fail to admire the precision with which the hounds drew three small coverts, blank, every hound being intent on trying to find his fox. Mr. Osbaldeston spoke to them but little when in covert. In strong gorse he went in with them himself, and spaniels could not have done their work more satisfactorily.

As to their steadiness from hare, I could form no opinion; for I did not see more than three during the whole of my sojourn in Leicestershire. On entering Shangton Holt, a hound almost immedi-

ately challenged, and a fox, without any pressing gallantry broke in the direction of Rollestone, when being headed short back about a mile from where he was found turned up wind, and skirting Shangton Holt, was lost after a very pretty burst of twenty-nine minutes at Kibworth. The first twenty-five minutes was without a check, excepting momentarily at the point where he was headed, but as he was viewed, no time was lost. The pace was fast, and the distance six miles. I will not enumerate the runs which my diary affords me an opportunity of doing; for, unless some particular events had occurred, details of them would be uninteresting, especially after a lapse of years.

In the difficult art of breeding hounds, it is universally admitted, that Mr. Osbaldeston had no superior, and their condition was equally perfect; their stoutness, in a great measure the result of condition, was pre-eminently good. As they hunted six days in the week, meeting at half-past ten o'clock, and often having long days, neither Mr. Osbaldeston nor the first whip could devote their attention to the feeding department, they must have been entrusted to the kennel-man, upon whom a vast deal of the condition of a pack depends, but not all. Good sound constitutions are necessary to begin with, and plenty of strong exercise, or work, in due season to complete the desideratum.

The favourite stud hound in the Squire's kennel,

was Furrier, by the Belvoir Saladin, out of Mr. Osbaldeston's Fallacy, entered in 1821, and in the year 1829, at which period they were in the Pytchley country, there were no less than twenty-four and a half couples by him. The Squire would occasionally make the whole of his draft for the day's hunting of hounds by this celebrated sire, a circumstance which, I believe, no other master could imitate. In the abstruse mystery of breeding hounds, Mr. Osbaldeston was to the highest degree eminent; he perfectly understood the symmetry of the fox-hound, and those combinations which are necessary to attain perfection. His retirement from the list of masters of hounds, which took place in 1834, was a subject of serious regret to every devotee of "the noble science."

Many persons were of opinion that Mr. Osbaldeston was hasty; that he was quick, cannot be denied, especially in getting his hounds away after a fox had broken covert, and it was that quickness which occasioned so many of the fast bursts for which he was so highly celebrated. To make a good beginning is of the greatest importance; if the first burst is sufficiently fast to blow the fox, and force him off his point, a huntsman may play with him as he pleases afterwards. A long slow run of three or four hours' duration was not then, any more than it is now, the kind of chase to suit the prevailing spirit in Leicestershire. That was exploded in

Mr. Meynell's time, and is not likely to be revived. With respect to pace, Mr. Osbaldeston was perfectly suited to the country and the taste of those who hunted in it. Leicestershire is a county peculiarly adapted to Mr. Osbaldeston's style of hunting, where he could throw his hounds into a gorse covert, with almost a certainty of finding; where he could get them away close to his brush, and with anything like a scent bring his fox to hand in from half an hour to five and forty minutes. Having accomplished that, he could go and find another. It was on those occasions the Squire shone conspicuously. It was his maxim to kill his fox expeditiously. When his hounds came to a check, his cast was a bold one, quick and decisive, and by this means he either hit the scent again immediately, or lost his fox. Slow hunting runs after foxes that had gained a great advantage would not have been satisfactory to one in fifty of the field, or the master himself. Many who frequent Leicestershire care very little about hunting; it is the pace they admire, and if hounds cannot go sufficiently fast to get away from the horses, they are sure to be ridden over. When merely going from one covert to another, Mr. Osbaldeston would proceed as fast or faster than hounds in the provincial countries generally go through their hunting runs. All this suited the tastes of the men of the day, and it was evident he could not fail to be po-

pular. It was vastly amusing, when the hounds with a good scent, and the assistance of a brook or some rasping fence, got a field or two ahead of the first flight, to hear the Squire call out in ecstasies, "Now ride; why the devil don't you ride over them now?" Perhaps, it was bad policy, because it excited many thoughtless men to override his hounds, when they had opportunities of doing so, out of bravado; but I can always enter into the enthusiastic delight of a master of hounds, when he beholds his darlings beating the horses.

The next in succession was Lord Southampton, who took the country in 1827 or 1828, at which time Mr. Osbaldeston removed his establishment into Northamptonshire. Not having hunted in Leicestershire during his lordship's occupation of it, I am unable to give any account from personal observation; but it was unanimously acknowledged that Lord Southampton's anxious desire to promote sport could not be exceeded by any other master of hounds before or since. The two first seasons the hounds were hunted by Dick Burton, who lived with Mr. T. A. Smith during his occupation of the Quorn country, and likewise at one period with Mr. Osbaldeston. What pack of hounds his lordship commenced with I cannot ascertain, unless (which I believe to have been the case) he purchased some from the latter gentleman. When the Duke of Bedford, then Marquis of Tavistock, gave up the Oakley country to the

Honourable Grantley Berkeley in 1829, Lord Southampton purchased the Oakley hounds, which from their blood were in high repute, combining much of the old Pytchley and Badminton sort, and engaged George Mountford to accompany them as huntsman, with George Beers to whip-in. About this time, new kennels were built at Leicester, and the hounds were removed to them, and, instead of being called the Quorn, as heretofore, they were called Lord Southampton's hounds, in consequence of which it was generally apprehended by those whose fond remembrances associated with "days of auld lang syne," that the quondam glories of the Quorn would be lost. Still the country was unaltered, and the hounds afforded first-rate sport.

In 1831, Lord Southampton found a successor in Sir Harry Goodricke, Bart., who undertook to hunt the country without any subscription, and payed covert rents, earth-stoppings, and even damages, with a liberal hand. They were now called Sir Harry Goodricke's hounds; and another removal of the kennels took place. Leicester was certainly not a central situation, whatever other advantages it might have possessed; to obviate which, Sir Harry built new kennels at Thrussington, nearly mid-way between Melton and Leicester; a more convenient spot could not be selected. Mountford continued with the hounds as before, when either illness or an accident prevented him from performing his duties in the field,

and his place was supplied by William Derry. At the conclusion of the first season, Sir Harry had an opportunity of making an addition to his pack, by the purchase of Mr. Shaw's hounds; that gentleman giving up the country in the neighbourhood of Lichfield and Sutton Coldfield, in consequence of deficiency of foxes. During the short period Sir Harry was destined to preside over the hunting arrangements of Leicestershire, his liberal disposition, kindness of manners, and sporting talent, gained for him the highest respect, I may say, affection and adoration; but unhappily he was cut off in the prime of life when sojourning at his seat Ravensdale Park, in the county of Louth, in Ireland, on the twenty-second of August, 1833, in the thirty-seventh year of his age. I was given to understand by some of his acquaintance, that a short time previous to his death, he had been amusing himself otter-hunting, and at all times regardless of weather, had taken a severe cold, the shock from which his constitution was unable to withstand. To the astonishment of everybody, and, I believe, not less so to his fortunate successor, he left all his unentailed property to his friend, Mr. Francis Littleton Holyoake, a gentleman who had been well known in Leicestershire as one of the best, if not the best, man over a country of his time. He was the eldest son of Mr. Francis Holyoake of Tettenhall, Staffordshire, a great friend

and contemporary of Mr. Corbet's, and a member of the Stratford Hunt Club, when Warwickshire first became distinguished in the annals of fox-hunting.

Leicestershire now came into the possession of Mr. Holyoake, as it were by inheritance, together with the horses and hounds. A part of it was very soon afterwards separated, for the purpose of the Marquis of Hastings' establishing a pack of hounds to hunt that which has subsequently been called the Donnington country; an example which has been followed in other parts with manifest advantage. As foxes have become more numerous, the preservation of them more carefully considered, a given tract of country is capable of affording more hunting by such an arrangement. Mr. Meynell only hunted three days in the week over a greater extent of country than the Quorn was, prior to the separation of the Donnington. The former now affords five or six days in the week, the latter three; thus, eight or nine days' hunting is obtained where, in olden times, they could only enjoy three. Shortly after coming into possession of the property, Mr. Holyoake took the name of Goodricke, and was subsequently made a baronet. No material alterations were made in the hunting establishment, except such additions of horses and hounds as circumstances required; and after two seasons of remarkably good sport, the management was taken by Mr. Errington,

who kept them till the spring of 1838, when the late Lord Suffield came forward, and supplying a lavish expenditure of money, his lordship was expected to eclipse every former master of hounds in this aristocratic atmosphere. How frequently are human expectations disappointed — unfortuitous, unexpected events frustrate our hopes; for there is luck, whether it be good or bad, attendant upon fox-hunting, as well as upon other mundane affairs. The weather, for example, has great influence, and as first impressions carry great weight in public opinion, if a new aspirant to the honours of being a master of hounds is fortunate enough to have a good scenting season, which enables him to show great sport, to begin with, his fame is established; if, on the other hand, the prevailing condition of the elements is such, that there are very few scenting days, all the misadventures are ascribed to want of experience and bad management. This was in some measure the case during Lord Suffield's short reign in Leicestershire. No man could possibly have been more anxious to show sport than his lordship; but unpropitious circumstances appeared at the commencement, and did not quite clear off afterwards. Desirous to procure the most efficient and valuable pack of hounds in the market, Lord Suffield applied to Mr. Lambton, and received a partial refusal of that gentleman's pack at the previously

unparalleled price of 3,000 guineas. In the interim, the sale of them was contracted by two friends of Mr. Lambton's to Sir Matthew White Ridley for 2,500 guineas, and they were actually paid for and in his possession, and the servants who had been for many years with these hounds were also engaged. There was a question whether the friends of Mr. Lambton were quite in position to contract the bargain, but in this dilemma Sir Matthew most honourably prevented all cavil by giving up the claim to his lordship; at the same time retaining the servants to officiate with the hounds he then had in his possession; he also purchased those with which Lord Galway had been hunting the Rufford country the preceding season. So far, matters appeared to have taken a favourable turn, but with a strange huntsman, fresh whipper-ins, and a new kennel-man, all of whom were perfectly unacquainted with the hounds, their qualifications, properties, habits, dispositions, and constitutions, in a fresh country totally different to the one in which they had been accustomed to hunt, where they were seldom, if ever, pressed upon by hard-riding men, or even molested by crowds of horsemen, and with these inconveniences having to encounter a vast deal of very changeable weather, at all times adverse to scent, it is not wonderful that their sport was far from brilliant. At this period another change

took place in the locality of the kennels; Lord Suffield erected new ones, with stabling and all other requisites, in the village of Bildestone. They were only occupied by his lordship one year, when the hounds were sold to Mr. Robertson, to hunt the adjoining country to Sir M. W. Ridley's.

In November, 1839, Mr. Hodgson was hunting Leicestershire, with a clever pack of hounds exhibiting great power, which he brought with him from the Holderness country. This gentleman likewise brought with him the reputation of being a first-rate sportsman, but his style of hunting differed materially from that of Mr. Osbaldeston. Although he did not hunt his hounds himself, as he had done when at Beverley, he liked to see them work up to their fox—an accomplishment which I feel assured can never be realised in this country as a general practice, till every field is surrounded by a nine feet brick wall, or some other equally impracticable barrier, which will effectually prevent the horsemen from pressing upon hounds. I hunted with them several times after the Christmas of their first season, and was particularly struck with Mr. Hodgson's conciliatory manner with his field. On one occasion the hounds were running their fox in a plantation near Beau Manor; there was a green ride near the side of the covert, in which was the greater portion of the field, and into which the hounds brought the

scent—a very ticklish one—just in front of the leading horsemen. They carried it on along the side some trifling distance, to where there was a gateway leading short out of the covert, and to a sportsman attentive to the working of the hounds, it was quite probable the fox had turned through the gate, therefore pressing on them at that crisis might have occasioned a check. Very fortunately the leading man observed it, and pulling up his horse, held up his hand, as a caution to those who were close to him, which had the good effect of inducing them to slacken their pace. The hounds having room, turned with the scent beautifully, and Mr. Hodgson riding up to the gentleman who had evinced so much care, thanked him for having done so. Such courteous bearing on the part of a master of hounds has a great effect in keeping a field in order. Mr. Hodgson adopted a peculiarity of costume, when in Leicestershire as a master of hounds, by wearing a brown instead of a scarlet coat. This he was said to have chosen because, having hunted his hounds in person when in the Holderness country, they should not recognise their former huntsman when that trust was deputed to another.

Mr. Hodgson only continued in the country two seasons, and on his retirement it was taken by Mr. Greene, of Rollestone, whose popularity and influence rendered him in every respect ad-

mirably calculated to occupy the ostensible and honourable distinction; he was the first country gentleman who ever had these hounds, and under his management everything was conducted with the utmost satisfaction. But within the present century this far-famed land of fox-hunting has been destined to undergo numerous changes of masters; events sadly opposed to the success of the chase. However talented, however wealthy, however gifted with all the accomplishments and the various desiderata to render a new master of hounds unexceptionably eligible, the fact of a change is a serious impediment to the advancement of the noble science in any country. There are so many minor details influenced by changes, that in the aggregate they become important. No less than fourteen different masters of hounds have presided during the time I have named, and fifteen changes have taken place, Mr. Osbaldeston having been twice the occupier of the Quorn establishment. In 1847, Sir Richard Sutton, whose celebrity had been established in the Burton and Cottesmore countries, removed his hounds from the latter to the Quorn kennels, again restoring the title which had been in abeyance for several years. The Donnington country becoming vacant in 1851, Sir Richard Sutton undertook to hunt it; so that the Quorn country may be said to have regained its original extent.

That the surface of Leicestershire is most materially altered, no doubt can exist; nor can those changes fail to have had great influence over fox-hunting. Since Mr. Meynell commenced, a considerable extent has been enclosed, and consequently the nature of the soil is greatly altered by cultivation and agricultural improvements. A great increase in the quantity of stock, both cattle and sheep, has followed, which cannot fail to present difficulties to hounds and huntsmen.

Mr. Lockley was wont to speak of the numbers of double posts and rails in many parts, which in Mr. Meynell's time had been recently enclosed. While they offered scarcely any impediment to hounds, they were often serious ones to horses.

To go in and out cleverly was an accomplishment of some importance. At the distance the posts and rails were frequently placed, there was scarcely room for a horse to land between them; it was therefore necessary to take them obliquely, which was an inducement to many horses to refuse, and which they would do, unless the riders were gifted with superlatively good hands and their horses with delicate mouths. Clearing both flights at once was in many instances impracticable in consequence of their height and width. Some of these fences were remaining in 1826, and the worst fall I ever experienced was at one of them. I was riding a very resolute

horse, and put him at the rails slowly, to induce him to jump in and out, but he attempted to fly them at one effort, consequently he fell on the second rail, and rolling over me, I was very nearly crushed. The principal timber fences now to be encountered, exclusive of gates, are in the gaps, or weak parts of the hedges, placed there to protect the quick; and the bullfinches, although many of them are strong, especially in the Harborough side, are not to be compared with those in the Pytchley country. Most of the quickset fences are planted on the ground; therefore those difficulties which proceed from false or rotten banks in many other countries, are not met with here. The ox-fences, as they are termed, consist of a ditch, quickset-hedge, and a flight of posts and rails, which must be cleared in the stride, to do which requires resolution in both horse and rider; and when the rails happen to be on the further side, a fall is a frequent result. The strong thorn fences which abound, require horses of great courage; and good water jumpers are indispensable, for the brooks are numerous, and many of them wide. The Whissendine and the Smite are names known to many by report, who are strangers in the country, and are not unfrequently *fathomed* by those who enjoy their venatic pastime in this aristocratic shire. There are numerous others of minor importance, and some which come under the de-

nomination of rivers; they are of course not negotiable. Fortunately, however, hounds do not very often cross them; they are not in the run of the foxes.

Ridge and furrow prevail so extensively in this country that it is scarcely possible to go into a field which has not been laid in that form. When they are to be crossed, they are distressing to horses, and as they vary considerably both in width and height, it is desirable very frequently to take them in an oblique direction to accommodate the horse's stride. This will make a vast difference in the animal's capability of endurance, and especially with those which have not been accustomed to it. Some of the furrows are very deep, and in wet weather horses' feet will often cut in over the fetlocks, if they happen to step in the furrows. To obviate this, horses require to be nicely held together, and ridden in such a direction that their feet will not fall in the deepest part of the furrows; which, independently of causing horses to tire very soon, is apt to make them hit their legs and produce over-reaches.

An anecdote is told of Dick Knight, a very celebrated huntsman to the Pytchley hounds during the time the late Earl Spencer was the master. It must be observed, that Dick considered everything perfectly unconstitutional which in any way interfered with hunting. With a

dolorous countenance he addressed the earl, "It's all over with the country, my Lord!" "What now?" inquired Lord Spencer. "Oh those d—d canals they are cutting, must ruin it, my Lord; there will be no getting across it after hounds." Now had this zealous huntsman lived at the time railways were projected, he would most assuredly have joined in the cry against them; for it was generally expected that they would become such positive impediments as to annihilate fox-hunting entirely. In this, as in all other matters experience is the most certain guide, and railways do not present those obstacles which were anticipated. Indeed, canals may be considered more opposed to fox-hunting than railways, without presenting any of the accommodations which are derived from the latter. The surface of Leicestershire has been extensively marked with railways. The Midland Counties intersects the Quorn country nearly midway, passing from Leicester to Melton, with a branch from Syston Junction to Loughborough and Derby. The Leicester and Swannington branch affords communication with the south-western portion of the hunt, and the Donnington country is equally provided for. As evidence of the accommodation which railways afford, on the 16th of January, 1852, Sir Richard Sutton accompanied by Lord Cardigan, came to meet the hounds at Wymes-

wold from the baronet's seat in Norfolk, where they had been on a shooting excursion the previous day, and after enjoying a night's rest in the land of turnips, barley, and birds, were not fifteen minutes behind time in the land of grass, ox-fences, and foxes.

The Quorn country according to the arrangements made for its division from the Donnington, extends from Widmerpool to Gumley; Bunny, which is beyond Widmerpool in a northerly direction being neutral. Great Dalby is on the eastern point, where it is bordered by the Cottesmore, and on the north-eastern by the Duke of Rutland's. The Pytchley claim the country on the south-east, and the Atherstone on the south-west and west. The Donnington country intervenes between the Quorn and Mr. Meynell Ingram's Hunt.

CHAP. VII.

Preference of Hunting Countries; how determined. — Comparison between the Quorn and Pytchley. — Frequent Changes of Masters in the Pytchley. — The late Earl Spencer. — The late Mr. John Warde. — Lord Althorp and Sir Charles Knightley.—Sir Bellingham Graham. — The late Mr. Musters. — Mr. Osbaldeston. — The late Mr. Wilkins. — Mr. George Payne. — Sir F. L. H. Goodricke. — Lord Chesterfield. — Mr. Smith. — Presentation of Plate to Mr. George Payne. — The late Lord Alford. — The Honourable F. Villiers. — Lord Hopetoun. — Boundaries of the Pytchley Country. — The Atherstone Country. — Favourite Fixtures. — Extent of the Country. — The late Lord Donegal. — The late Lord Talbot. — The late Lord Vernon. — Supposed Period when the Country was hunted by Lord Vernon. — Hunt Uniform. — Rivalry. — The late Mr. George Talbot. — Mr. Harbord.— Colonel Cooke.— Sir Richard Pulestone. — Mr. Osbaldeston.— Messrs. Hall and Arkwright. — The late Mr. Adderley.— The late Mr. Otway. — Four Districts. — The Atherstone Country established by Mr. Osbaldeston. — Kennels and Stables built at Witherley.— Hounds.— Mr. Meynell Ingram's Country established. — Extent of Country. — Mr. Meynell Ingram's Pack. — Sir Bellingham Graham. — Whipper-ins. — Hounds. — Lord Lichfield's Hounds. — Whipper-ins. — Accident to Thurlow and Jesse. — A Run with Lord Lichfield in which Colonel Wyndham distinguished himself. — Attractions. — Lord Lichfield's Retirement. — Sir John Gerard. — Mr. Applethwaite. — Captain Thomson.— Shenstone Country.— Boundaries of the Atherstone Country. — Warwickshire. — Mr. Corbet succeeded Mr. John Warde. — The Stratford Club. —Will Barrow; his Death. — Original Extent of Warwickshire. — Kennels at Stratford-on-Avon. — The Dunchurch Coverts. —

The late Lord Middleton; his Lordship's Accident and Resignation. — Mr. Shirley. — Mr. Hay.—Boxall. — Leamington in bygone Days. — Changes in the Character of the Country. — Leamington *v.* Melton. — Attractions of Leamington. — Mr. Fellowes. — Mr. Russell. — Mr. Thornhill.—Mr. Granville. — An Occurrence in Mr. Thornhill's Time. — Part of the Country not hunted.—The North Warwickshire Country established by Mr. Vyner. — Kennels at Solihul. — The Pack. — Mr. Vyner's Success. — Mr. Hellier. — Increase of Leamington. — Leamington Sportsmen. — Mr. Barnard, now Lord Willoughby de Broke. — The Kineton Kennels. — Zeal of the Warwickshire Farmers. — Architectural Expedition. — Arrangements for hunting North Warwickshire. — Railway Accommodation at Leamington. — Extent and Boundaries of modern Warwickshire. — Extent and Boundaries of North Warwickshire. — The Residence of the Poet Somervile. — Earl Fitzhardinge's Estimation of the Poet.— Original Letter. — Remarks on Somervile's "Chase." — Extracts.

By comparison we are enabled to decide upon the merits which one hunting country possesses over another; but, in making those comparisons, many minor details must be brought forward before we can arrive at a fair conclusion, and these details can only be appreciated by persons who have had practical experience in them. The Quorn country is generally acknowledged to have assumed a preference over all others; perhaps that may have originated, in some degree, in consequence of the importance with which Mr. Meynell's brilliant career adorned it. With such a fortuitous commencement as an introduction,

at a period when the "noble science" was in its infancy, and not conducted with much form or system, it is not surprising that this high character should have been established. Melton Mowbray at an early period became the favoured resort of aristocratic fashionable fox-hunters. No other hunt was equally fortunate, and, as a nucleus of wealth, it has given every encouragement to render Leicestershire perfect. Next in superiority the Pytchley Hunt was by many ranked; but, with all the advantages which Leicestershire presents, it is doubtful whether Northamptonshire is not equally deserving of fame. No one can be more capable of judging on this point than Mr. Osbaldeston, as he hunted both countries, and has been known to declare his opinion in favour of the Pytchley. Without desiring to detract from the one at the expense of the other, or to create any jealousy in the minds of the partisans of either, it is but just to place them on an equality, or, in kennel phrase, "couple" them together. Whoever has ridden over the grassy plains of Northamptonshire cannot fail to be delighted with the prevailing nature of the pasture lands. The fences in both countries are similar, except that those in the Pytchley Hunt are the stronger of the two. Brooks are nearly equivalent. The coverts are in each unexceptionable; giving the preference to Northamptonshire for woodlands

of inestimable value in the opinion of masters of hounds.

Unfortunately the Pytchley country has been destined to change hands very frequently. Prior to 1799, the country was hunted by the late Earl Spencer, but the precise number of seasons his lordship continued, I am not in a position to state, but it was certainly as long back as 1779. At the close of the last century and the commencement of the present the justly celebrated Mr. John Warde was hunting it; he was succeeded by Lord Althorp in 1808; and Sir Charles Knightley entered, in conjunction with his lordship, during a few seasons. In 1820, Sir Bellingham Graham had the management, but only retained it one season. Mr. Musters also had the hounds, though not long. In 1828, Mr. Osbaldeston made his *entrée*, and hunted the country with unparalleled success till the spring of 1834, when Mr. Wilkins, of Maeslough, undertook the responsibilities, but, like Sir Bellingham Graham, did not continue more than one season. In 1835, Mr. George Payne had them, with a liberal subscription from his brother-in-law Sir Francis Holyoake Goodricke, who took the principal responsibility after his resignation of the Quorn. Lord Chesterfield took the country in 1838, and hunted it in magnificent style about three seasons, attracting a numerous coterie of

aristocratic fashionables. In 1841, Mr. Smith was also on the list; and, subsequently, Mr George Payne a second time; indeed, the latter gentleman appears to have been ready to lend a helping hand on all occasions when the interests of his country required his assistance, and highly must his services be appreciated by his friends and neighbours. If any proofs were wanting of the esteem in which many gentlemen are held, who have zealously devoted their time and talents to fox-hunting, they would be found in those gratifying testimonials which are frequently presented to them. However complimentary and flattering such offerings may have been on other occasions, none could have exceeded that which was proffered to Mr. George Payne on the last day of March, 1846. Between three and four hundred of the nobility, landowners, farmers, and others, all good men and true to the noble cause, connected with the Pytchley Hunt, assembled at the festive board, to request Mr. Payne's acceptance of a piece of plate, designed for the purpose of a candelabra and epergne, standing three feet six inches in height, and weighing six hundred ounces, upon which was the following inscription: —"Presented to George Payne, Esq., Sulby Hall, by upwards of six hundred farmers, tradesmen, and others, of Northamptonshire, as a testimonial of their gratitude for his unceasing efforts to

promote the manly and healthful sports of the county. March, 1846."

The late Lord Alford hunted the country with great spirit, liberality, and success, and kept the hounds on a whole season after declining health prevented his lordship participating in the sport. The Hon. F. Villiers succeeded his lordship, in 1851, and the following year resigned to Lord Hopetoun, under whose management they cannot fail to maintain the distinction for which they have been so justly celebrated.

The Pytchley country is surrounded by the Quorn; the Cottesmore, Earl Fitzwilliam's; the Oakley, Lord Southampton's; the Warwickshire, and the Atherstone Hunts.

Comprising a portion of Leicestershire, about an equal extent in Warwickshire, and an angle of Staffordshire, is the Atherstone country, very little inferior to the Quorn; indeed, that part which is in the county of Leicester is quite equal to any in the kingdom. He must be fastidious who cannot be pleased with the country from Burbage Wood, Peckelton, Bosworth, Osbaston, Sutton Ambion, Normanton Gate, Ullesthorpe (a railway station), Newnham, Churchover, Coomb Abbey, and several other places of meeting on the eastern boundaries, most of which are easy of access from London by rail. Ashby-de-la-Zouch may be mentioned as the northern extremity, and

Coventry the southern. Sutton Coldfield and Lichfield are on the west, which is the most indifferent portion of the country. This is the present extent of the district; to reach this point, it has undergone numerous changes of masters and boundaries, rather perplexing to describe in consequence of its having been hunted in parts by so many different persons before it became identified by the name which it now bears.

The first master of hounds in this district of whom I can obtain any information, was the late Marquis of Donegal; but the exact period when his lordship hunted the country I am not able to state, neither can I ascertain the extent; suffice it, therefore, to say that it was principally in the neighbourhood of Lichfield and Tamworth. After the marquis came Lord Talbot, of Ingestrie Hall, who was succeeded about the close of the last century by Lord Vernon, in what was then called the Sudbury country, but which now forms a part of Mr. Meynell Ingram's. Lord Talbot's hounds were sold to Mr. Lambton in 1793, which affords some criterion of the date when they were in force. Lord Vernon hunted a considerable extent of country around Lichfield, including Cannock Chase (not used in the present day as a hunting district, a great portion of it being converted into coal fields), Black Slough, and Hopwas Hayes. To this the country near Gopsal appears

to have been added by Lord Vernon, where there were kennels; and his lordship resided at Gopsal House six weeks at a time, alternately with his own seat at Sudbury, thus dividing the hunting season in the two countries. These hounds were in great repute, and esteemed among the most celebrated of the day. Instead of wearing the prevailing colour, scarlet, in the hunting field, Lord Vernon and the members of the hunt appeared in coats of a bright orange, which, so long as they were new and fresh, must have presented a very gay appearance. The distinction of costume occasioned much rivalry between the members of this and other hunts when they happened to meet in the field. There was jealous riding even in those days. Matters went on thus for several seasons, when, in 1805, Lord Vernon gave them up to the Hon. George Talbot, and they were kept by subscription, his lordship giving 500*l.* per annum, which was liberally augmented by other noblemen and gentlemen in the neighbourhood, and they were called Lord Talbot's hounds, in consequence of the ostensible manager being a member of the Church. That gentleman's death in 1812, occasioned another change, when some of the hounds were sold, and the remainder kept at Sudbury a short time by Mr. Harbord, Lord Vernon's son-in-law, who confined their operations to the immediate locality of the kennels. At this period

the late Colonel Cooke, a sportsman of great celebrity, and author of "Observations on Fox-hunting," hunted a portion of that which was not retained by the Sudbury hounds, and Mr. Adderley, of Hams Hall, hunted the Gopsal side, or that in the neighbourhood of Lichfield and Sutton Coldfield, but where I cannot clearly define. The late Sir Richard Pulestone visited the vacant district, whichever that was, occasionally, having, at the same time, another country in Shropshire. But these gentlemen made way for Mr. Osbaldeston. Messrs. Hall and Arkwright also hunted some portion of it, but only for a short period; and, as they sold their hounds to Mr. Osbaldeston, it must have been prior to the decease of Lord Vernon, which event took place in 1818. Mr. Adderley, of Hams Hall, kept hounds, and also Mr. Otway, of Sandford Hall; but the precise dates and districts are subjects which, from the conflicting accounts with which I have been supplied, lead me to the conclusion that they hunted the country on terms of mutual accommodation, without much regard to the punctilious restraints of modern times. In fact, there appear to have been at least four districts, sometimes blended, at others separated from each other; the Sudbury, the Gopsal, the Lichfield, and the Warwickshire.

We now approach a period when the arrange-

ments for hunting the country assumed a greater degree of regularity; and it was entered upon by Mr. Osbaldeston with a very trifling subscription. It was now for the first time called the Atherstone Hunt, and the coverts around Dunchurch were included. This took place in 1814 or 1815. A club was formed, and, with funds supplied by the members, the kennels and stables at Witherley were erected. The first two years the Sudbury country was hunted by Mr. Osbaldeston, and he occupied temporary accommodation at the Flitch of Bacon, Wichnor Bridge. In addition to hounds which he brought from Nottinghamshire, including the pack he had purchased from Lord Monson, he likewise bought those with which Messrs. Hall and Arkwright had hunted the Sudbury country previously to his occupying it. After a short time, finding the foxes were sufficiently numerous, Mr. Osbaldeston resigned the Sudbury country, and confined himself exclusively to the Atherstone, which, in consequence of the increased preservation of foxes, afforded excellent sport five days in a week.

In 1816, Mr. Meynell, who has since added the name of Ingram on the acquisition of a large fortune, came forward and established the Hoar Cross country, comprising the Sudbury and Derbyshire districts, with that around his own seat. It is bounded on the north by Ashbourne, on the

south by Lichfield, which takes in Black Slough, Orgreave, and Catton; it extends to Radbourne Hall, four miles from Derby, on the east, and to Blithfield, six, and Chartley Park, eight miles from Stafford, on the west; altogether forming a very superior country. It is hunted in a most sportsman-like manner; for this gentleman inherits all the qualifications of his celebrated ancestor. The pack with which Mr. Meynell Ingram commenced hunting consisted principally of the hounds from Mr. Talbot's kennels, and subsequently procuring others from Mr. Heron, which were descended from the old Quorn blood, with vast pains taken and superior judgment exercised in breeding during a period of thirty-seven years, they have now arrived at a state of perfection equal to any in the kingdom.

From 1817, when Mr. Osbaldeston retired, to 1820, the Atherstone country was hunted by Sir Bellingham Graham. The truly sporting character of the honourable baronet's establishment is fresh in the recollection of those who are old enough to have hunted with him. Both hounds and horses were of a very superior description. As a huntsman Sir Bellingham ranks among the first, whether amateur or professional; and he was always attended by superior servants. William Staples, Kit Atkinson (whose son now hunts the Vale of White Horse hounds), John Wiggles-

worth, and Thomas Flint, were each of them in the baronet's service, though I believe not all of them in the Atherstone country. They have, however, subsequently occupied the ostensible post of huntsmen in various establishments with great credit to themselves.

Sir Bellingham Graham commenced hunting the Atherstone country with the hounds which he brought with him from the Badsworth, which he had occupied two seasons previously. He made a considerable augmentation by the purchase of the Worcestershire hounds from Colonel Newnham in 1818, when that gentleman resigned. His complement was kept up by drafts from Lord Lonsdale's. I never saw Sir Bellingham's hounds till he took the country now called the Albrighton, in 1823, by which time, through sales, exchanges, and drafting, few, if any, could have remained of those with which he hunted the Atherstone; but I can well recollect they were celebrated for their great power and substance.

When Sir Bellingham Graham quitted this country for the Quorn in December, 1821, Lord Anson, now Earl of Lichfield, became the baronet's successor; this was not only his lordship's commencement as a master of hounds, but likewise as huntsman. He purchased a lot of hounds, to begin with, from Mr. Mytton, and it was a scratch pack to all intents and purposes.

Subsequently, his lordship procured augmentations from the late Sir Thomas Mostyn and Mr. Musters, which enabled him in a short time to form an effective pack. Considering the odds and ends he had to begin with, the highest compliments are due to his lordship's talent and energy, especially as a *debutant*. Many masters of hounds, with a superior pack ready made to their hands, have spoilt them in a very short period. It was Lord Lichfield's task to make a good pack out of rough materials, and most successful was the issue. In this he was ably assisted by Robert Thurlow and Jesse, two most effective whipper-ins.

These men had the misfortune to meet with a most fearful accident on Lichfield race-course, when engaged clearing the ground at the Anson Hunt Meeting, in the year 1823 or 1824. I was close by them, and witnessed it. Both were riding in contrary directions, intent upon their duty, and each of them going at three parts speed, they came in furious contact with each other, the consequence of which was most dreadful contusions. By the force with which they met, Jesse was hurled into the air; Thurlow's leg was fractured, and it is a miracle they were not both killed.

The hounds purchased from Mr. Mytton, it must be observed, were well bred; many of them were from Sir Richard Pulestone, others from the

Belvoir and Cheshire kennels; but, from the way in which they had been managed, they were wild and uncertain. The success which attended Lord Lichfield's zeal and perseverance is evidence of what may be accomplished with hounds if the blood is good from which they are descended. I perfectly well remember hunting with Lord Lichfield in the beginning of 1825, and have vivid recollections of a run from Odstone late in the day, on which occasion Colonel Wyndham, of the Scotch Greys, a very heavy weight, distinguished himself. The hounds found in the wood, and, without any pressing, the fox broke at the upper end, pointing straight for Chartley Forest. The hounds got away on very good terms, and never checked till they arrived at the stone walls on the borders of the forest, where they lost him. Colonel Wyndham took the lead at starting, and was never dispossessed of it. There were only six up when the hounds came to the check, among whom were the noble master and the two whipper-ins.

Lord Lichfield continued to hunt the country nine seasons, and showed unexceptionably good sport. Large fields were attracted, and many gentlemen not connected with the country made it their place of winter residence. Like Lord Sefton, Lord Lichfield was a patron of "the ribbons," and it was a very usual occurrence to see his lordship's and several other four-in-hand teams at

the covert side. Mr. Applethwaite's neat turn-out of greys, which, if my memory serves me correctly, were previously the property of Lord Lichfield, never failed to excite admiration. General regret prevailed when it was known that his lordship was about to resign, not only in consequence of the excellent sport which he had afforded, his kind, affable, and effective management in the field, his liberal hospitality, and all the other qualifications and accomplishments which adorn an English nobleman; but likewise from the ostensible cause—indisposition. Severe and repeated attacks of gout compelled Lord Lichfield to relinquish the sport which he had followed with so much enthusiasm and success.

When his lordship's intention to resign was made known, Sir John Gerard, with a long purse and a liberal heart, offered to hunt the country at his own expense, which proposal was accepted; and at the commencement of the season 1830 and 1831, Sir John was in possession of the hounds, and occupying the kennels and stables at Witherley, Thurlow and Jesse still continuing to whip-in. Little if any alteration was made in the establishment, wherein Sir John evinced much discretion and judgment. The horses only were changed, and those which were provided for the use of the men were superlatively good. Sir John Gerard essayed to hunt the hounds himself,

but was not so successful as his predecessor. It is an accomplishment which all cannot attain; even men who have been brought up in the kennels as whipper-ins, and in that calling have been eminently successful, have in some instances failed when they attempted to undertake the duties of huntsmen.

At the conclusion of the first season, Sir John Gerard resigned the country to Mr. Applethwaite, together with the hounds. Thurlow then assumed the post of huntsman, and Jesse took the place of first whip. A subscription was at the same time entered into for the purpose of defraying the expenses. Well acquainted with the country and well known in it, and, as well as he was known, highly respected, no gentleman could have been selected better calculated to have the management of the Atherstone hounds than Mr. Applethwaite. He interfered but little with the active management in the field, but presided over all with the kind and placid demeanour of a country gentleman. One of the most substantial proofs of the satisfaction which he gave, exists in the fact, that he continued to be master of these hounds for a longer period than any other. On Mr. Applethwaite's resignation, he was succeeded by Captain T. A. Thomson, who still retains possession of the country.

In former days, there was a country of confined extent, in the neighbourhood of Shenstone, on the

western boundaries of the Atherstone, at one period hunted by Mr. Chadwicke, and subsequently by Mr. Shaw, but there have not been hounds kept in it during the last twenty years. This tract separates the Atherstone from the Albrighton Hunt. Mr. Meynell Ingram's country is on the north of the Atherstone, the Quorn on the east, the Pytchley joins it on the south-east, in the neighbourhood of Lutterworth, and the Warwickshire on the south, with which there are some neutral coverts.

Very few counties have attained greater importance than Warwickshire, and, as the Quorn gained its primitive celebrity under Mr. Meynell, so was Mr. Corbet the founder of fox-hunting renown in Warwickshire. I find that about the year 1790, and for some few years previously, Mr. John Warde hunted this country in conjunction with a portion of Oxfordshire, in the neighbourhood of Bicester, but only during a part of the season. Mr. Corbet is said to have hunted the country about twenty seasons, and, as it is well known that he gave up to Lord Middleton in 1812, the period of his commencement is easily determined.

In those days the kennels were at Stratford-on-Avon, and there was a club upon an extensive scale established, although both Mr. Corbet and his successor, Lord Middleton, hunted the country without any subscription. The name of Will

Barrow is well known in Warwickshire and Shropshire, as he was born and died in the latter country, and during the whole of the time Mr. Corbet hunted the former, he was the huntsman. This poor fellow's end was a melancholy one; after escaping all the perils of fox-hunting, he met with his death in consequence of a fall with the harriers kept at Sundorne by Mr. Corbet, the son of his first master.

The Warwickshire country was originally very extensive, but, like all others, it has been reduced and divided to suit the convenience of masters of hounds and resident sportsmen. At the time Mr. Corbet occupied it, exclusive of the principal kennels at Stratford-on-Avon, he had others at Meriden, between Coventry and Coleshill, for the purpose of hunting the neighbouring coverts, in those days known as the Warwickshire Woodlands. The coverts near Dunchurch have at times been hunted by the Warwickshire hounds, sometimes by the Atherstone, at others by the Pytchley.

From Mr. Corbet, this country passed to Lord Middleton, who hunted it ten seasons, showing great sport; but I doubt whether his lordship's general arrangements were highly appreciated. The celebrated John Wood was huntsman during the greater portion, if not the whole of the time. In 1822, Lord Middleton had the misfortune to receive a fall from one of his horses, which shook

his lordship considerably, and induced him to give up hunting for a time; upon which Mr. Shirley of Eatington Hall came forward, and undertook the management of the hounds till some other gentleman could be found ambitious of distinction. After keeping them two seasons, Mr. Hay of Dunse Castle, in Scotland, succeeded. During three or four seasons, this gentleman had been hunting the Woore country in Staffordshire; therefore, he was no novice when he entered upon Warwickshire, and he undertook the duties of huntsman upon himself, with William Boxall as first whip.

By this time, Leamington was beginning to assume some importance. The first time I hunted in Warwickshire, was during the period when Mr. Shirley had the hounds. In those days, the only hotel affording tolerable accommodation was Copps's, and that was comparatively a cottage. This country had, no doubt, undergone considerable changes since the palmy days of Mr. Corbet. The plough had been introduced extensively, and at the present time it is still more generally used.

About twenty years ago it was declared in moments of exultation by a few sanguine friends of Leamington, that the hunting attractions in that place would be so powerful as totally to eclipse Melton. That, however, has not yet come to pass, and many very great changes must take place

before it does. There are doubtless many accommodations to be met with in a large town, which Leamington has now become. Family men may find it suit their convenience to make it their winter residence; but men of family will generally prefer Melton as hunting quarters—that is, if hunting in a good country is their motive.

Mr. Hay only continued to hunt the country three seasons, and it is somewhat singular that his four successors respectively held it precisely the same time; they were Mr. Fellowes, Mr. Russell, Mr. Thornhill, and Mr. Granville. Boxall was appointed to the office of huntsman on Mr. Hay's retirement, and continued till 1835, when he was succeeded by Thomas Day, who had previously turned the hounds to him.

At the time Mr. Thornhill hunted the country, when the hounds were drawing the gorse coverts, or small plantations, it was the custom for all the field to assemble on one spot, to avoid heading the foxes, and a most excellent precaution it was; but on one occasion, I remember, the hounds, Mr. Thornhill, and his men alone, got a start, which was not quite fair. They were drawing Watergall Gorse, and a large conclave of anxious sportsmen were quietly stationed in the field above it. The hounds found their fox very silently, and he immediately went away on the lower side, pointing for Burton Dasset, and they had nearly reached

the canal bridge, before any one was aware they had found. Although it is nearly twenty years since, the circumstance is fresh in my recollection. One gentleman, seeing the master and a whipper-in riding across the country, dashed off in the same direction; others followed his example, but as the hounds went away mute at a great pace, and neither a halloo nor touch of the horn heard, they were not fairly overtaken till they came to a check.

After Mr. Corbet declined, a portion of the country fell into disuse, or was only hunted occasionally. The extensive woodlands at Birchley Hayes and Corley, were sometimes visited by the Atherstone, and I believe are still neutral; at all events, they were when Mr. Hellier hunted the North Warwickshire.

The portion of country already named, being literally, though not actually vacant, Mr. Robert Vyner of Eathorpe, a gentleman who had been zealously fond of hunting from his boyhood, and whose literary talents have been subsequently devoted to the "noble science" with very great success, found it a fitting opportunity to establish a pack of hounds in the deserted regions. In this praiseworthy effort, he was cordially supported by Mr. Bolton King of Umberslade, and other county gentlemen interested in the good cause, and in 1834, we find him with about thirty couples of

hounds at Solihull, where some out-buildings were converted into kennels, and Mr. Vyner was occupying apartments in a house close at hand. George Gardner officiated as whipper-in. Most enthusiastically did the new master enter upon his duties. With a scratch pack, a small subscription, no great abundance of foxes, and those from not having been hunted, not knowing much country, he showed capital sport the first season. But what cannot a man accomplish, aided by talent and observation, if his heart is in the right place? Mr. Vyner may be said to have studied fox-hunting from his infancy. Thus was the North Warwickshire country established, but not as an integral one — a reservation being made in the arrangements, that it should be given up to any future master of the Warwickshire who might desire to hunt the whole, as the late Mr. Corbet had done. So great was the satisfaction given by Mr. Vyner, that the following year the subscription-list was considerably augmented by the inhabitants and visitors at Leamington, and the sporting men at Birmingham, shortly after which the establishment was removed to Leamington.

In 1838, Mr. Thomas Shaw Hellier succeeded Mr. Vyner, and however great the latter gentleman's zeal and ability were manifest, his successor entered into the spirit of the chase *con amore*. Mr. Hellier had kept a pack of harriers at his seat

in Staffordshire, and for several years had made Leamington his winter residence for the purpose of hunting. He was, therefore, no novice in the management of hounds, or acquaintance with the country; and, having a purse sufficiently weighty to withstand any disappointments which might arise from inadequate or unpaid subscriptions, entered upon his duties with most flattering prospects of success; nor were they disappointed. The large fields attendant upon these hounds whenever they met at any of the favourite fixtures in the Dunchurch country, afforded ample proofs of the estimation in which they were held. Although a heavy weight, Mr. Hellier hunted his own hounds, and he was superlatively well mounted. Nothing puts the perseverance of hounds and the patience of huntsmen to a stronger test than short-running, dodging foxes, which appear to have no point to make for; in hunting them Mr. Hellier excelled.

Leamington had by this time become a gigantic town, and many excellent sportsmen made it their place of abode during the winter season; but if there were many good sportsmen, there were a great many more who only hunted for the purpose of sporting their pink and leathers on parade. That they are great obstacles to sport cannot be denied; when hounds cannot run, they are perpetually pressing upon them; when they can run, these

gentlemen generally go home, and if they are asked what sport they have seen, answer, None. In that they speak the truth, having either gone home before the run commenced, or been left behind; but it is not very satisfactory to a master of hounds who exerts himself to the utmost to afford sport to hear such reports have been circulated, when, in point of fact, an excellent run had been shown to those who remained out and rode to the end.

The South Wold country becoming vacant in 1843, Mr. Hellier removed his hounds into Lincolnshire; and the North Warwickshire being without hounds, Mr. Wilson, of Gumley, came forward, and hunted it with great liberality, but only about two seasons. Previously to this period, the Warwickshire country was unoccupied, and in 1839, Mr. Barnard (now Lord Willoughby de Broke) undertook to hunt it, and his lordship still continues to hold it. In this year the kennels and stables at Kineton were erected, and as so much liberality and good feeling were connected with the undertaking, a brief account of the proceedings will not fail to be interesting. The land on which the buildings were erected, was the gift of George Lucy, Esq., of Charlecote Park, and the design was made by his brother-in-law Hugh Williams, Esq., without the assistance of any professed architect. They

consist of two houses, one for the huntsman, and the other for the stud-groom; sleeping-rooms over the stables for the helpers, and a mess-room for their accommodation. There are ten loose boxes, three three-stall stables, and a bail-stable capable of holding four hacks, convertible also into two boxes. The kennel consists of three principal lodging-rooms, and two smaller ones, with all the necessary appurtenances of feeding-room, boiling-house, flesh-house, &c. The funds for the construction of these buildings were supplied by the Members of the Warwickshire Hunt. The materials were drawn to the spot by the united efforts of ONE HUNDRED AND EIGHTY FARMERS, who collectively had at work five hundred and fifty-three waggons. The first stone was laid on the 24th of July, and on the 15th of October the various apartments were occupied—the hounds, horses, and servants were in their respective quarters. It is doubtful if greater expedition in the construction of buildings was ever practised on any other occasion. What can be more conclusive of the good feeling which the Warwickshire farmers entertain for fox-hunting, than that they would come forward as they did gratuitously at a time, be it remembered, when they were also engaged with their corn-harvest? They always were a liberal sporting class of men, and their example is worthy of imitation.

The North Warwickshire country having for several seasons been without hounds, the Dunchurch side excepted, in 1850 it was arranged with Captain Thomson, the master of the Atherstone, that he should hunt a part of it as far as Hampton Coppice, Stonebridge, and Packington; the other portion to be hunted by the Warwickshire two days a week; a subscription being entered into at Birmingham to meet the extra expenses. At that time the Warwickshire kennels had to find hounds, horses, and men for six days in the week. This was accomplished by the whipper-in performing the duties of huntsman in the North Warwickshire district. Mr. Selby Lowndes, after having shown great sport in a portion of the Duke of Grafton's country during the preceding ten years, returned it to Lord Southampton in the spring of 1853, and entered upon North Warwickshire.

As Leamington is provided with railway accommodation, there is no difficulty in reaching either the Quorn, the Pytchley, Lord Southampton's, Mr. Drake's, or even the Heythrope hounds, at some of their places of meeting, if the sportsman is desirous to vary the field of his amusements; which he may sometimes be induced to do, for it must be admitted, that many of the best parts of the Warwickshire country lay very wide. The North Warwickshire will, no doubt, be again considered as the Leamington pack; but there will

be, as there always have been, many sportsmen frequenting that town, who will not admire the heavy plough and woodlands which mostly prevail.

The Warwickshire country, as at present defined, extends from Marton Village, between four and five miles north of Southam, to Wolford Wood, near Moreton-in-the-Marsh, and from Radbourne on the east to Oversley Wood on the west. It is thus surrounded by other hunts: the North Warwickshire, Mr. Drake, on the east, the Heythrope on the south, and Earl Fitzhardinge's Broadway country joins in the vicinity of Chipping Campden and Moreton-in-the-Marsh, with a small portion of country not hunted: the Worcestershire forms the western boundary. The North Warwickshire reaches from Hill Moreton on the east, where it is joined by the Pytchley, to Castle Bromwich, within five miles of Birmingham; the Atherstone is situated on the north and north-east; and the Worcestershire is the nearest on the west, where there is a narrow continuation of country not hunted.

Warwickshire is celebrated as the birthplace of the inimitable poet, Somervile; not forgetting also that Shakspeare drew his first breath in the same county. A greater compliment could not have been paid to the author of "The Chase," than an observation made by Earl Fitzhardinge in the

spring of 1852, on the occasion of his lordship being presented with a superb piece of plate, in testimony of the subscribers' appreciation of the noble lord's generosity, in maintaining a pack of fox-hounds for hunting the Berkeley and Cheltenham countries. Earl Fitzhardinge having acknowledged the testimonial, and made some remarks on the duties of masters of hounds, traced his ardent love of the sport to his perusal, when a boy, of Somervile's poem of "The Chase." It would be a fortunate circumstance if every young nobleman and gentleman of property were to follow his lordship's example, and derive a similar impulse from the poet's effusions. Somervile's residence was at Edstone, close to the well-known fox-covert Austywood, in the parish of Wotton Wawen, where he was buried in 1742, aged fifty; and the following letter from him to Mr. Mackenzie at Wotton, is characteristic of the customs of those days.

"Sir,

"I am very sorry I must deny myself the pleasure of your good company to-morrow. I was to-day with my Lord Coventry's harriers, and I know Ball will not hold out two days together. I meet them again on Thursday morning in Wilmcote Pasture, near Stratford; and should think myself very happy in your good company. I must be there at six in the morning. It may be that a little variety may please

you, and induce you for once to condescend to hunt hare. If you do, it will be a great satisfaction to

"Your most humble servant,

"W. SOMERVILE.

"Pray let me know by the messenger if you can conveniently come on Thursday; and I will wait for you at Edstone."

Ball was of course the poet's horse, and evidently the only one he had; and it speaks highly for his kind feelings, that he declined taxing the animal's powers with unnecessary severity. He says he must be at Wilmcote Pasture at six in the morning, which was doubtless the usual hour of meeting in those days. The eloquent persuasion with which he endeavours to induce his friend to join him in the field is admirably expressed.

It is impossible to read Somervile's poem without being thoroughly convinced that many of the customs, events, and circumstances connected with the chase, which we are generally disposed to consider as modern discoveries or improvements, were known to him, and must therefore have been practised in or before his time. He says:—

"In thee alone, fair land of liberty,
Is bred the perfect hound, in scent and speed
As yet unrivalled, while in other climes
Their virtue fails—a weak, degenerate race."

His instructions in the selection of an appropriate site for a kennel are admirable, and his directions appertaining to kennel discipline have scarcely undergone any alterations. On the size of hounds Somervile has given an excellent lesson; and although some masters have disregarded it, experience has corroborated the value of the poet's admonition: —

"But here a mean
Observe, nor the large hound prefer, of size
Gigantic; he in the thick-woven covert
Painfully tugs, or in the thorny brake,
Torn and embarrassed, bleeds: but if too small,
The pigmy brood in every furrow swims;
Moiled in the clogging clay, panting they lag
Behind inglorious; or else shivering creep,
Benumb'd and faint, beneath the sheltering thorn."

On the breeding of hounds his opinion is beautifully expressed, and well worthy of attention: —

"Observe with care his shape, sort, colour, size;
Nor will sagacious huntsmen less regard
His inward habits; the vain babbler shun,
Ever loquacious ever in the wrong.
His foolish offspring shall offend thy ears
With false alarms, and loud impertinence.
Nor less the shifting cur avoid, that breaks
Illusive from the pack; to the next hedge
Devious he strays, there every muse he tries;
If haply then he cross the streaming scent,
Away he flies vain-glorious; and exults
As of the pack supreme, and in his speed

And strength unrivalled. Lo! cast far behind
His vexed associates pant, and lab'ring strain
To climb the steep ascent. Soon as they reach
Th' insulting boaster, his false courage fails;
Behind he lags; doomed to the fatal noose,
His master's hate, and scorn of all the field.
What can from such be hoped, but a base brood
Of coward curs, a frantic, vagrant race?"

The interesting subjects of rendering hounds steady from riot, and entering them to their game, are amusingly and harmoniously discussed; but as I have quoted sufficient to show that many of the present customs and circumstances connected with the chase were known to our ancestors, I will only urge those of my readers who have not read Somervile's poem, and are anxious to become more intimately acquainted with the subjects on which it treats, to follow the excellent example of Earl Fitzhardinge.

CHAP. VIII.

The Duke of Beaufort's Hounds; their first Establishment. — Fox's Pad on a Bell-rope. — The Heythrope Country in the sixth Duke's Time. — Death of the Duke of Beaufort, Founder of the Fox-hounds. — Philip Payne. — William Long. — The sixth Duke of Beaufort. — A Description of the Hounds in former Days. — A well-directed Reproof. — Fire at Heythrope House. — His Grace's Retirement from the Heythrope Country. — Arrangements for hunting it. — The Huntsman and Whipper-ins. — Popularity of Fox-hunting. — Boundary of the Heythrope Country. — Preservation of Foxes. — Formation of the Pack; their Blood and Description; Varieties of Form; Height and Power. — Nature of the Country. — Lifting Hounds. — An Example. — Talent of Jem Hills. — Lifting Hounds vindicated. — John Goddard. — Lord Redesdale. — Choice of Country. — Death of the sixth Duke of Beaufort. — Changes frequently detrimental to the Pack. — The Beaufort Hounds ten Years ago. — A Lawn Day. — Majority of the Marquis of Worcester. — Hunt Uniform. — Costume of the Hunt. — Preservation of Foxes. — Season of 1852–1853. — Anecdote of William Long. — The Badminton Country; Extent and Boundaries; Hill and Vale. — Badminton Park. — View from Worcester Lodge. — Coverts. — The Duke of Beaufort's Ardour for the Chase. — The Marquis of Worcester. — Lord Glamorgan. — Death of the late Duke of Beaufort. — Mr. William Long. — Charles and Nimrod Long. — A Day's Sport in 1853.

THE Duke of Beaufort's hounds claim distinction for having been in the uninterrupted possession of the family, descending from father to son, during a long series of years.

When hounds were first established at Badminton, they were devoted to the pursuit of the stag. Fox-hunting was introduced by Henry, the fifth Duke of Beaufort, as nearly as can be ascertained, about the year 1780. A circumstance is related which affords authority for this. At the period named, there was a very celebrated divine, a most worthy gentleman, and highly respected by his Grace's family, named Doctor Penny, who resided at Badminton in the capacity of chaplain, and his bell-rope was ornamented with a pad of a fox set in metal, upon which there was an inscription, and this is said to have been a pad taken from the first fox killed by the Duke of Beaufort's fox-hounds.

In addition to the country around Badminton was another in Oxfordshire which had previously been hunted by the Lord Foley of that day, who disposed of his hounds to Earl Fitzwilliam. The Duke of Beaufort rented Heythrope House from Earl Shrewsbury for the convenience of hunting that country alternately with the Badminton, as in those times foxes were not sufficiently numerous to afford a season's sport without such an arrangement. This duke died in 1803, and was succeeded by Henry Charles, the sixth duke, in whose possession the hounds gained the great celebrity which they have ever since maintained. Philip Payne, the huntsman, was first entered as

whipper-in to the Earl of Thanet's hounds, from whom he went to Lord Darlington, and afterwards to the Earl of Lonsdale as huntsman, which engagement he retained twelve years; he then hunted the Cheshire hounds two seasons, and was engaged to perform a similar duty at Badminton in 1802. This appointment he held till 1826; and on his quitting the duke's service, William Long, who had for many years whipped-in to him, occupied his place.

I never had an opportunity of meeting the sixth Duke of Beaufort's hounds but twice, some twenty years ago, which was in their Heythrope country; on one occasion, at Addlestrope Gate, on the other, at Boulter's Barn. They had not anything remarkable in the way of a run on either day, except on the first a pretty scurry from Oddington Ashes over the Evenlode brook—in which several enjoyed the delights of a cold bath — nearly to Chastleton, where they lost their fox. I perfectly well remember the aristocratic character of the establishment, and also an anecdote of the noble duke, who found it necessary to remonstrate with a young Oxonian on a previous occasion who had wantonly pressed upon the hounds, so much so as to cause them to lose their fox. It is so consistent with his Grace's kind yet impressive deportment, that I must not omit its introduction. The zeal for notoriety had so far overcome the

propriety of this young aspirant to equestrian fame, that he had several times pressed the hounds off the scent, which was but an indifferent one; and at length the fox was lost, when he was doomed to receive this well-directed admonition. His Grace rode up to him, and taking off his hat, exclaimed, "Sir, I have to thank you, and I beg every gentleman in the field will follow my example, take off their hats to you, and thank you for spoiling a very good day's sport."

An unfortunate accident occurred at Heythrope, —the destruction by fire of part of the mansion, when airing it for the reception of the duke and family. A portion was saved, which is still devoted to the use of the servants of the present Heythrope hounds. This caused his Grace to take up his temporary winter abode at Chapel House; but that was only during part of one season, and in the spring of 1835, the noble duke, in consequence of ill health, signified his intention of relinquishing the Heythrope country. Some difficulty was at first experienced in finding a successor; but at length a committee was formed, and subscriptions entered into, when Mr. Langston of Sarsdon undertook the active management, supported by Lord Redesdale and Mr. Mostyn. Jem Hills, who had been first whip to the late Lord Ducie, then the Honourable Henry Moreton, was engaged as huntsman; Edward Bullen, from the Duke of Beaufort's,

as first, and John Goddard as second whipper-in. Thus was the Heythrope established as a distinct country; and the result speaks incontestibly for the increased favour in which fox-hunting is held at the present period. Previously to the time when the Duke of Beaufort relinquished it, it was supposed that neither of his Grace's countries, individually, was sufficiently extensive, or that the foxes were sufficiently numerous, to afford three days a week throughout the season; they now each of them admit of four days in the week, and are abundantly stocked with foxes. In point of fact, the number of hunting days is doubled. A line drawn from east to west, commencing at Deddington and ending at Moreton-in-the-Marsh, defines the northern boundary; there are only two places of meeting, south of Witney, which are Westwell Village and Tar Wood, and the latter is neutral with the Berkshire. North Aston, Hopcrofts Holt, Sturdys Castle, and Begbrook, are on the eastern extremity; New Barn, Cold Aston, and Eyeford, are on the western. These are the extreme places of meeting, although there are coverts which they draw beyond those boundaries. The length of the country from east to west, as the crow flies, does not much exceed twenty miles, and the width, from north to south, is little more than fifteen. It is surrounded by Earl Fitzhardinge's, the Warwickshire, Mr. Drake's, the Old Berkshire,

and the Vale of White Horse Hunts. It may well be designated a nice compact country, and I feel convinced there is no other of the same limits that can vie with it in the number of foxes which it contains, and the sport afforded on an average of years. It is to the consideration and persevering attention of landlords, tenants, and the occupiers of their own estates, in the strict preservation of foxes, that such an abundance of them is maintained.

The Heythrope pack was at first composed of twenty-three couples of hounds from the Duke of Beaufort's kennels, ten couples of draft hounds from Lord Radnor's, a like number to enter from Mr. Drake, nine couples and a half of draft hounds from the Warwickshire, one couple of draft, and one couple and a half of unentered hounds from the Honourable H. Moreton, and one couple from the Duke of Rutland. The custom of walking puppies being new to the country, the opportunities of breeding for the first few years were very limited, when they had recourse principally to Mr. Drake for reinforcements; but as the popularity of the new establishment increased, that difficulty was overcome, and they are enabled most years to put forward a sufficient number of young hounds of their own breeding to recruit their ranks, resorting of course to other kennels when required for fresh blood, generally selecting those of the Earls Yarborough and Fitzhardinge,

the late Mr. Drake, and the Warwickshire. They are a wiry, active style of hound, and proverbially stout, with very great speed, admirably adapted to the country in which they hunt, some of which is not very favourable to scent. Principally descended from the old Badminton sort, they possess the good qualities inherited by that blood, although in point of substance they may be lighter, and their symmetry somewhat changed. Every breeder of hounds has his peculiar fancies, and endeavours to obtain a particular style suitable, as he considers, to the nature of the country in which they are to hunt; and although the blood of two packs may be identical, and their general qualities similar, their shape and make may be quite different, simply from the fact of two huntsmen putting forward hounds of different proportions. This may be clearly exemplified by a comparison of size; one man prefers only the large upstanding hound four or five and twenty inches high, and another will only enter those which do not exceed one or two and twenty inches. The celebrated Mr. Meynell was wont to say, "the height of a hound had nothing to do with his size." By this it must be readily understood that he meant "power;" and with due respect to the memory of that great authority, it would have been more explicit had he adopted the latter expression.

Without abounding with what can be denominated severe hills, the country consists of alternate hill and vale; there is consequently much variation of scent; especially on the Cotswold Hills, celebrated for the famous breed of sheep, which stain the ground to a considerable extent. Most of these upland soils hold but a fleeting scent, especially in windy weather; and when the hounds come to a check, if unnecessary time were to be lost, there would be very little chance of showing a run, much less of killing foxes. Independently of this, the hounds are very often subjected to being pressed upon too closely in chase. The nature of the country is generally favourable for horses; the fences, particularly the stone walls, are practicable; and the number of ardent spirits from Oxford and other parts, do not always give the hounds the room they require. These circumstances have induced Jem Hills to adopt a system of lifting his hounds, perhaps more frequently than any other huntsman of the day; and they certainly bear it in an extraordinary manner. It was my good fortune to hunt with them nearly three seasons, and I had therefore an opportunity of forming some opinion of the manner in which they were handled. Doubts are sometimes expressed on the propriety of Hills' method, and I particularly recollect a circumstance a few years ago, which confirms me in the opinion that it is correct under the

difficulties by which he is surrounded. They met at New Barn early in December, and found in Farmington Grove a brace if not a leash of foxes, but there was no scent to afford a run with either. They then proceeded to Sherborne Cow Pasture, where they again found, and Hills seemed determined not to lose a chance by allowing the scent to die away whenever a check occurred. A master of hounds accustomed to a slow, good-scenting, woodland country, not intruded upon by many horsemen, who was out, expressed to me his astonishment, at the same time giving an opinion that hounds so treated would never hunt when required to do so; and in which opinion I should certainly coincide with respect to nine packs in ten. Almost at the moment the observation was made, the hounds came to a check. They spread beautifully, and every one of them had his nose to the ground, trying to recover the scent. They soon hit off the line, and by dint of hunting and Jem's talent, they killed their fox after a dodging run of an hour, in the osier bed close to where they found him. "There," said I to my neighbour, "can any hounds work better than that?" Jem Hills is actually thought by some people to possess an intuitive—it may be said a supernatural—knowledge of a fox's line, and I have heard a somewhat ridiculous anecdote of his having nearly ridden a fox down himself,

without any hounds, in a covert, merely by placing himself in the ride, and hallooing to the fox as he crossed; but the tale is rather too marvellous, because it is well known a fox will not continue on the move—more especially he will not cross open spaces, unless pressed by hounds. Neither can I believe Hills ever perpetrated such an unsportsman-like act. If a huntsman does not know the run of the foxes, he does not know a most important part of his business. Of Jem Hills' talent I have a very high opinion, and whatever may be said against his system of lifting his hounds, I maintain that it is a practice thoroughly adapted, and, I may add, indispensable to sport in that country. To see these hounds draw the hanging covert at Eyeford or Jolly's Gorse (a favourite covert near to Bradwell Grove) is a treat worth riding any distance to enjoy. The alacrity which Hills displays in getting his hounds away, and on the line when a fox has broke covert, exceeds that of any man I have ever yet seen, Mr. Osbaldeston not even excepted; and it is one of the most important operations towards attaining a good run with blood at the finish.

After three or four years' practice as underwhip, John Goddard was promoted, and a more effective one never turned a hound. He entered on the duties of first whip some ten or twelve

years ago, since which the White Hart, at Chipping Norton being vacant, he determined to try his hand at inn-keeping. That, however, did not suit his taste long; and he has again entered into the service of the chase.

During the last twelve years, the Heythrope country has been entirely under the control of Lord Redesdale. A more popular master of hounds cannot exist. His lordship's devoted attention to parliamentary duties occasions his absence from the field more frequently than those who hunt with these hounds would wish. After business commences in the House, Lord Redesdale almost invariably repairs to London. It was reported at one period, in consequence of the railway which now passes through the country, but which was then only in anticipation, that his lordship would no longer keep on the hounds. Fortunately, however, that intention was abandoned, and it is cheering to observe, that railways do not prove the impediments to fox-hunting that they were expected to do.

It is not always—perhaps with more propriety I might say, *it is not often*—that any man has it in his power to lead that course of life which he most desires. If I had the good fortune to possess an income adequate to the expenses, I should certainly prefer Leicestershire before any other country to hunt in. But not being so ambitious,

I should be perfectly contented with three or four good horses, with a convenient house and stabling in a central part of the Heythrope country. It is not one in which the wear and tear of horse-flesh is great; there are decidedly more than an average of good runs during the season; it is an agreeable country to ride over; and the noble owner of the pack is a most affable and accomplished sportsman.

Before the close of the year in which the sixth Duke of Beaufort resigned the Heythrope country, his Grace was called "to that bourne from whence no traveller returns." On the 23rd of November, 1835, the noble duke expired at his seat, Badminton, in the sixty-ninth year of his age.

It generally happens, on the decease or retirement of a master of hounds, that considerable changes take place, and the pack very frequently suffers materially in consequence. A son or successor usually fancies he can improve upon the works of his ancestor or predecessor, and, in attempting to do so by hasty proceedings, very commonly finds himself in a labyrinth of error. A fresh huntsman is probably engaged, and selected from the ranks of hard-riding whipper-ins, in whose opinion the old pack is too slow, and, endeavouring to remedy that failing, heaps confusion on confusion. This, however, was not the case on the death of the Duke of Beaufort.

The same huntsman was retained; the same hounds remained in the kennels; and the same good taste predominated in selecting hounds worthy of the honour of perpetuating their species; and, excellent as they no doubt were at the time Philip Payne handed over the couples to William Long, I have no hesitation in pronouncing them superior to what they were, at all events according to the taste and opinion of the present day. I well recollect going through the kennels in 1845, and have the form of several of the favourite hounds in my mind's eye at the present moment. Potentate was then just entering into his prime; Flyer and Frankfort possessed much character, as also Launcelot, Rutland, Boaster, and Dashwood. The hound I liked the least was Duncan. I thought him too short and compact to be a stud hound in a fast, fashionable pack; but, to make amends, he was of a capital good sort, and I see there is some of his blood now going.

I was never fortunate enough to meet the Duke of Beaufort's hounds on what is called a Lawn day, which is a meeting on Badminton Lawn, when foreign princes and potentates are invited to participate in the glories of the chase, after the custom of English fox-hunters, when one of the most beautiful packs of hounds is drafted for the occasion, when many of the finest hunters which England can produce are paraded for admiration,

and are in readiness to perform their duties; when vehicles of all kinds, from the aristocratic four-in-hand to the humble sporting dog-cart, are freighted with loads of joyous hearts; when the hospitalities of the mansion are offered to all classes; and when all orders and degrees of sportsmen, from the peer to the peasant, join, unceremoniously yet courteously, in the pleasures of the chase, and representatives of all other orders come to enjoy the scene. The programme of the arrangements for celebrating the coming of age of the present duke included an appointment for the hounds to meet on the Lawn; and I hoped it would have afforded me an opportunity of seeing what has been represented to me as the most perfect thing of the kind that can possibly be conceived. In this I was destined to disappointment. Two days' hard frost had set at defiance all possibility of hunting; and the only out-door amusement consisted in the "breaking up" of a huge ox, which was roasted in the "open."

The uniform worn by the members of the Duke of Beaufort's Hunt is blue, lined with a very light buff. It is the only hunt which does not adopt scarlet for field costume. The huntsman, whipper-ins, and second-horse men are clad in green plush, as are likewise the men belonging to the Heythrope. This, I apprehend, originated in the circumstance, already named, of the stag-

hunting establishment kept up at Badminton previously to the introduction of fox-hunting, when green was no doubt the colour usually worn on those occasions.

The Badminton country is considerably more extensive than the Heythrope; and so well are the foxes preserved, that it affords quite a sufficient number for four days in the week, admitting forty-nine and a half brace to be killed in one season; which was the case with that of 1852–53, said to have been the best they ever had; and the number of the foxes killed exceeded that of any former winter by four or five brace. It will long be remembered, both by sportsmen and farmers, as the wettest period ever known. The scent being especially good, the hounds fairly ran away from the horses, and therefore, not being pressed upon, were enabled to exert their hunting faculties to great advantage. I was impressed with a remark made by William Long, which is so characteristic of the huntsman, who is in ecstasies when he sees his hounds run away from the horsemen, and by their condition enabled to maintain their advantage. A gentleman observed to him the very deep state of the country, when Long replied, "What does it signify how deep the country is, so that the hounds can run?"

The Duke of Beaufort's country is joined on one side by the Earl Fitzhardinge's Berkeley country;

that is, principally on the west and north-west. On the extreme north, there is a hilly district, about Stroud, scarcely ever hunted. On the east is the Vale of White Horse; and in the neighbourhood of Devizes Mr. Thomas Assheton Smith's comes within reach. On the south is a country, now without hounds, which was formerly hunted by Mr. Horlock. Avening village is the farthest place of meeting north of Badminton; and New Park, one mile from Devizes, on the south, which may be estimated, in a direct line, at about thirty miles. Bushton is the eastern extremity; and Stoke Park the western. There is much variety of hill and vale, the former being fenced with stone walls, and the latter with hedges and ditches mostly of a practicable nature. In the vale are several good brooks, some of which are not easily negotiable. There is a considerable portion of grass about Hullavington, and what is called the Christian Malford country, which, with an accomplished hunter, is a good one to ride over and see sport in. Badminton Park, which is nine or ten miles in circumference, is on an elevated situation. It is a magnificent demesne; and the stranger cannot fail, on arriving near it, to be impressed with its noble grandeur. The approach from Worcester Lodge is superlatively beautiful. When viewed through the gates, the park, full three miles in length, with the fine avenue of trees and

the mansion at the distance, presents the *ne plus ultrà* of a ducal residence. In the estimation of a sportsman, the interest of the scenery is not a little enhanced when Worcester Lodge is the appointed place for the hounds to meet at.

There is a singular fox covert in this hunt, called Boxwood; and, as the name implies, it is composed entirely of that evergreen shrub. It is situated on a hill, and is therefore very dry, and a favourite resort of foxes. Mr. Huntley, the owner of the estate, like all the other country gentlemen in the neighbourhood, is a zealous friend of the vulpine family. The most perfect coverts, perhaps, in England are to be seen on the property of Mr. Holford at Weston Birt. The attention bestowed upon them is extraordinary. They are composed of various kinds of plantation trees, shrubs, thorns, and gorse; and whenever an open or bare space presents itself, some neighbouring thorn, shrub, or a young tree most suitable and convenient, is plashed down in a manner similar to that of laying a hedge, by which the barren part is covered. The underwood is consequently very thick, and difficult to draw. They abound with game and foxes to an extraordinary extent; and great credit is due to the keeper, whose name is Garland, for his exertions in carrying out his master's wishes.

To the unfeigned regret of every member of

the hunt, and all others who were accustomed to attend the late duke's hounds, his Grace was unable to appear in the field on horseback during the season of 1852 and 1853, in consequence of his old enemy the gout. But, evidently enlivened by and enjoying the cheering melody of the hounds, the Duke of Beaufort very frequently attended in a light phaeton drawn by a pair of piebalds, with a postilion and an extra pair of horses in readiness, with long traces, to assist up the hills, or in deep ground, or to exchange if the first pair became fatigued. With an outrider, to open the gates, and occasionally lower the walls, over the remains of which the carriage was sometimes taken, not without some apparent danger, guided by a thorough knowledge of the usual run of the foxes, his Grace was enabled very frequently to see a great portion of a run.

The difficult position of a master of hounds was invariably maintained by the noble duke with that elevated yet courteous authority in the field, for which the family has at all times been distinguished. Some years ago, when the Marquis of Worcester was quite a boy, following the hounds on a pony, an unmannerly individual caused him great annoyance by rudely pushing before him at gateways and gaps, so much so, as to induce the young sportsman to complain to his father. The duke desired the marquis to point out the person,

upon which his Grace rode up to the offender, and said, "Allow me to introduce the Marquis of Worcester, and to express a hope that he may be permitted to follow his father's hounds without molestation."

The Marquis of Worcester* is, doubtless, as fond of hunting as any of his noble ancestors, never missing a day, when the imperative duties of his military appointment, or his senatorial engagements, will permit. In the field his lordship takes an active part, and, being always well mounted, invariably secures a good place in a run. His excellent judgment in horses is decided by the very superior animals which he has of late years selected for the hunting stables.

The youthful Lord Glamorgan†, who has already made a good commencement, generally accompanied his noble grandfather in the phaeton, with a pony in attendance, and escorted by an experienced, careful groom. When the hounds found, he mounted his steed, and, riding to points, was enabled to see a great portion of a run, unless it might be at a very fast pace with an uncommonly straight-necked fox. The young nobleman evidently takes vast delight in all the proceedings, closely watching every operation, in the event of a fox being killed, and investigating every minutia when the hounds mark their game to ground. So

* Now Duke of Beaufort. † Now Marquis of Worcester.

well brought up, his lordship cannot fail to become a talented sportsman.*

Upwards of half a century passed in the service of one family, is of itself a sufficient circumstance to command respect; but there are

* At the moment of these pages going through the press, the sad intelligence arrived of the dissolution of the Duke of Beaufort, which melancholy event took place at Badminton on the 17th of November, 1853. His Grace had suffered considerably from his painful enemy the gout, but immediate danger was not apprehended till the preceding day, when it was found necessary to send an express to the Marquis of Worcester, to announce the dangerous state of his noble father's health. With all the celerity of railway communication, his lordship was unable to reach home before the vital spirit had fled from its earthly tenement.

If the whole of this volume were devoted to the purpose, it would be insufficient to enumerate the exalted and amiable virtues for which the departed duke was distinguished. But when the head of a noble family, with whose history and fortunes we have for a long time been acquainted, descends into the tomb, we cannot, in common with the surrounding neighbours, fail to cherish the deepest concern and sympathy. That voluntary respect which is paid to rank becomes mingled with courteous and affectionate reverence. The mortal remains of Henry, the seventh Duke of Beaufort, were deposited in the family vault at Badminton on the 24th of November. It was a gloomy, wet, melancholy day, quite in accordance with the mournful hearts of those who attended the ceremony, which was conducted in the most private manner consistent with the rank of the deceased; but a large concourse of persons assembled to pay the last tribute of respect to the memory of the noble-minded, generous duke, of whom it may be truly said, he was the rich man's friend, the poor man's BENEFACTOR.

many other events to be added in commendation of the Duke of Beaufort's huntsman, Mr. William Long. Skilful and experienced in the field, he affords the hounds all the assistance they at any time require. Well conducted and appropriately civil to all classes, he has never been known to assume an offensive demeanour. Of his excellent judgment in breeding hounds I have already spoken. The exact year when he entered the establishment at Badminton I cannot state—that is immaterial; but I remember his having informed me he was at the funeral of the fifth duke, the founder of the fox-hounds, and that event took place in 1803, which is my authority for stating he has been upwards of half a century in the family.* At first he was engaged in the stables, and when a boy, was employed in conveying the letter-bags to and from the post. His superior seat on horseback attracted attention, and when the hounds were in the Heythrope country, the Duke of Beaufort, at that time Marquis of Worcester, being at Oxford, and always hunting when the place of meeting was within reach, young Long was deputed to take his lordship's hunters to covert. About this period John Wood, one of

* William Long also attended the funeral of the succeeding Duke of Beaufort; again on the late melancholy occasion; and, as he still continues in the service, he claims the distinction of having lived with four generations of this noble family.

the whipper-ins, met with an accident, when William Long was appointed to supply his place, and he has continued with the hounds ever since. He is whipped-in to by a nephew Charles Long, a most respectable quiet man, and a son, Nimrod, and if he becomes as good a man as his father, he will have great reason to be satisfied with his good fortune.

As a specimen of the sport which the Duke of Beaufort's hounds afford, I introduce the particulars of two runs which they had in one day, the 10th of March, 1853. It may be, and doubtless often has been, exceeded in respect to the time of a single run, but with reference to the pace, the distance of ground passed over, and the two runs combined, it may be considered the perfection of a day's sport, and thoroughly in accordance with the prevailing taste. The expression made use of by my informant, who was with them, was, "they had two good days' sport in one." The place of meeting was Yate Turnpike, and they found on Yate Common; went away immediately, crossing the Bristol road close by the railway station, passed the Yate Colliery, leaving the village on the right, making a strong point for Mapleridge Bushes; but the pace was too good, and the fox turned to the right over Sodbury Ridings to the margin of Sodbury Common, leaving the town on the right and Haines Grove

on the left; over the vale through Wapley Bushes by Westerleigh village, across the Bristol railroad, and ran into their fox in the open a few fields from the Ram-hill covert on Coalpit Heath. Time fifty-five minutes. The second fox was found in the pleasure grounds at Dodington, the seat of Sir William Codrington, one of the county members. They went away very fast over the park, when they crossed the road leading from Bath to Tormarton, half a mile on the Bath side of Cross Hands, over the wall country for Iles Quarry; evidently intending to visit Badminton, but being hard pressed, made a short turn before reaching New House farm, bearing to the left for Eyegrove, leaving the Plough and Cross Hands on the left over Old Sodbury Hill, and across the Bristol road again entered the vale, to Coombend, and passing close by Dodington House, gained the wood by Dodington Ash, and straight to Keynton Down, skirting Sherril Bottom, which is a mile long, and contains several main earths; running parallel with it made a strong attempt to reach Keynton Wood, when turning short up for the village succeeded in making his point to Keynton Down Gorse, but was pressed through and away over the Pucklechurch road near the turnpike; when leaving Tormarton on the right they pulled him down one field from Dodington Park wall. The latter run occupied one hour

and seventeen minutes, and the two united being two hours and twelve minutes, the whole at a great pace, completed a very severe day's work. The lady pack did the honours, and were all up at the finish, but many of the horses had declined before they had gone half the distance. My friend observed, that he never saw so many really good horses completely beaten as he did during the last run. The splendid condition of the hounds has been a theme of universal admiration throughout the season, and nothing short of the acme of perfection would have enabled them to have tasted their second fox on the severe day mentioned.

CHAP. IX.

Earl Fitzhardinge's Hounds; their first Establishment. — Difficulties overcome by his Lordship. — Blood will tell. — Subsequent Strains of Blood. — Superiority of Earl Fitzhardinge's Hounds; Reasons for their Superiority. — Changes opposed to Improvement. — Dispersion of celebrated Packs. — Earl Fitzhardinge's Country. — Ranger of the Forest of Dean. — Berkeley Country. — Commencement of the Season. — Hunting Arrangements. — Cheltenham Country. — Chedworth Woods. — Best Fixtures in the Cheltenham Country. — Superior Management produces Sport. — Henry Ayris. — The Whippers-ins. — Average of Foxes killed. — Preservation of Foxes. — Sporting Characters. — The late Mr. Jerry Hawkins. — The late Mr. Fretwell. — Jem Hastings. — Sammy Cornock. — Cheltenham indebted to Lord Fitzhardinge. — Pieces of Plate presented to Lord Fitzhardinge. — Worcestershire. — The late Major Bland — The late Lord Foley. — Colonel Newnham. — Mr. Hornyhold. — Mr. Parker. — The Kennels. — Cause of his Resignation. — Mr. Thomas Clutton Brock. — Kennels removed. — Carter. — Captain Candler. — Popularity. — Kennels. — A Committee. — New Kennels. — Colonel Clowes. — Stansby. — Vale of White Horse Hunt. — Celebrity acknowledged. — Mr. Codrington. — Mr. Harvey Combe. — Lord Kintore. — The late Earl Ducie. — Jem Hills. — Whipper-ins. — Kennels. — Lord Ducie's Hounds. — A common Error. — Working Properties more essential than Appearances. — Lord Ducie's Enthusiasm and great Exertions. — Retirement and Indisposition — Lord Gifford — A severe Day. — First-rate Sport with Lord Gifford. — Grant. — A Committee. — Dinnicombe.

— Mr. Villebois. — Boothroyd. — Mr. Villebois' Management. — Christopher Atkinson. — Christopher Atkinson Senior. — The Vale of White Horse Country.

One of the most celebrated packs of hounds, and which have been in the possession of the same proprietor during the greatest number of years without intermission, are Earl Fitzhardinge's. Mr. Farquharson is I believe the only other master of hounds who has had them a similar length of time. His lordship established them during the lifetime of the late Earl Berkeley, which I take from his own words in a speech made by his lordship on the occasion of a piece of plate being presented to him at Cheltenham, in the spring of 1852, when he facetiously enumerated some of the difficulties he had to encounter, and gave an amusing account of his first day's sport in Newent Woods on the 24th of September, 1808. Difficulties which prove fatal to men of weak minds, are incentives to greater exertions with others, provided they are gifted with resolution. From the following remarks made by his lordship, it will be gleaned that he formed his pack from drafts: —"He was obliged to take what he could get — the refuse of other kennels — those whose capital sentence had been commuted to transportation." It must be universally acknowledged that under judicious treatment the convicts became thoroughly reclaimed, and their offspring distinguished orna-

ments of the canine race. His lordship farther remarked, "But though so untrained, there was good stuff in them, and they were the ancestors of his present pack, which were acknowledged to be good hounds." Here is the secret unravelled, the blood was good, and "blood will tell," whether it be in man, horse, or hound. I cannot state what kennels were had recourse to during the first twenty years for fresh blood, but since that time, the Duke of Beaufort's prevailed extensively, and subsequently the Duke of Rutland's. The Earls Yarborough's, Fitzwilliam's, and Ducie's, Lord H. Bentinck's, Sir Richard Sutton's, and the Warwickshire; their Tarquin having found considerable favour, also a clever hound, named Villager, from Sir Tatton Sykes. The bitches have been exclusively bred in the Berkeley kennels for many years, and the fresh blood has been obtained by the introduction of stud hounds. But with such a good sort in such an extensive establishment, the necessity for resorting to other kennels is not urgent.

For a combination of all the perfections which are capable of being united in one pack, Earl Fitzhardinge's cannot be excelled. Power, symmetry, constitution, and sense, are qualities for which they are pre-eminent; their hunting faculties cannot be surpassed — for music they have always been celebrated; whether picking a cold

scent over the plough, racing over the grass, or working the intricate line of the wily animal, through gorse or woodland, they invariably speak to the scent. The wonderful head they carry is another subject for admiration. I could not fail on one occasion last season, observing the judicious system adopted to insure this important property, and which is universally practised with them. The hounds had been running their fox some little time in covert, when he broke over a large grass field, and was viewed by one of the second horsemen, who hallooed him, upon which two couples of hounds got to the halloo in advance of the pack. Coming up at the moment, and therefore enabled to see this, Ayris stopped them from going on with the scent till the body of the pack arrived — a plan which I am satisfied is perfectly correct, although I have seen many huntsmen of celebrity who would go on with one or two couples of hounds, leaving the remainder to be brought forward by the whipper-in. The motive for doing so is, that one or two couples of hounds being allowed to carry on the scent, will show the line the fox has taken; yet it must be remembered, that hounds will not run so fast single-handed as when they are in a body. Those which have got forward destroy the scent for those which are following, and if the fences are strong, being obliged to creep, the

practicability of carrying a head is defeated. Moreover, if it happens that a covert is at hand, and the fox enters and runs through it, the difficulty is increased, or even if he remains in the covert, there will be much uncertainty in hunting up to him, and a considerable time lost under any circumstances. There is also another objection, when there is a large field of horsemen out, in the danger which exists of having hounds ridden over in their efforts to work through the crowd. As long as there are hounds forward, every man considers he is justified in riding to them; and then the greater portion of the pack is among the horses. Opposed to any frivolous innovations or changes of fashion, his lordship has adhered to one stamp of hound, and by that means they have been brought to their present high state of perfection. It is the frequent changes which have taken place from uncontrollable causes, such as deaths, the retirement of masters of hounds, fresh huntsmen and other alterations in hunting establishments, that have ruined many of the most celebrated packs. It is unfortunate that after many of the most superior packs have been established, some circumstances have occurred to disperse them in all directions. The masterly artists who formed them no longer preside, and under different treatment and various tastes, the chief merits are lost.

Mr. Meynell's, Mr. Corbet's, Mr Osbaldeston's, Mr. Lambton's, and Mr. Drake's, have all suffered this unlucky fate.

Earl Fitzhardinge may be said to have three countries—the Berkeley, the Cheltenham, and the Broadway. When his lordship first commenced, he had likewise a considerable extent, called the Corse Lawn country, between Gloucester and Ledbury, including the Newent Woods, which are close to a prominent feature in Gloucestershire scenery known as May Hill. This district has not been hunted by Lord Fitzhardinge for many years, although I am not certain that it is actually given up; it now forms a principal portion of the Ledbury Hunt. The Lords Berkeley have a grant to hunt the wild cat, fox, and badger in the Forest of Dean, of which they seem to be hereditary rangers, or nearly so.

The Berkeley vale is principally grass, and except in very wet seasons, holds a capital scent. It is not extensive, and is bounded on one side by the River Severn, on the other by the Duke of Beaufort's country. For cub-hunting and entering young hounds, it is very superior. The hunting season always commences with these hounds on the 1st of October, when the place of meeting is the kennel. They continue during that month at Berkeley, and on the 1st of November proceed to Cheltenham, where they hunt out that month;

in December they return to Berkeley, remain there till after the festivities of Christmas and his lordship's birthday, which is on the 26th, have been duly honoured, when they again visit Cheltenham to commemorate the first month of the new year; pass February at Berkeley, which concludes the season in that country, and finally wind up at Cheltenham about the middle of April.

A great portion of the Cheltenham country is on the Cotswold Hills, commencing about three miles from the town, extending to Naunton Inn on the road to Stow, and bearing off on the right in the direction of Northleach, including Star Wood, Chedworth Wood, and Withington, all of which is a stone-wall country. Dumbleton on the borders of Worcestershire, and the district eastward of Cheltenham, are vale, and the principal portion of country hunted from the Broadway kennel is also vale. By a recent arrangement, Mr. Villebois, the master of the Vale of White Horse, is allowed to draw the Chedworth Woods during the months when Earl Fitzhardinge's hounds are in the Berkeley country. This is of great advantage to all parties; it affords the sportsmen located at Cheltenham an opportunity of meeting hounds when his lordship is absent, and it keeps the foxes, which are very numerous, in exercise. The Broadway country is hunted every Saturday during the periods when the hounds are at the

Cheltenham kennels. They hunt every day in the week except Friday, which is occupied in travelling to Broadway. The best fixtures within reach of Cheltenham, are Andoversford, Pusedown, Hazleton Grove, Brockhampton, Naunton Inn, Lidcomb, and Dumbleton. Good runs are often obtained from Norton and Down Hatherley.

To state that the country is first rate would be an assertion not to be borne out by facts, but yet it affords very superior sport; this without some explanation may appear paradoxical. But it is in consequence of the excellent management of every detail connected with the chase that so much good sport is obtained. From the hounds to the horses and the servants, no establishment in England is maintained with greater liberality, or directed with greater ability. Earl Fitzhardinge's extensive landed estates and numerous tenantry present opportunities for putting out a greater number of puppies than almost any other master of hounds enjoys; and the walks are of the best description, nearly all of them being at dairy farms. The horses are of first-rate character; some of them are bred at Berkeley, but in this I believe his lordship has not been very fortunate. Independently of a second horse for the earl, there is always one out for the huntsman, and another for the first whip, besides which, there is a man

constantly in attendance with the hounds, whose business it is to ride and make the young horses.

Till within the last few years, Earl Fitzhardinge always hunted the hounds himself, attended by Henry Ayris, to whom that office is now deputed. Ayris was first entered to hounds by Captain Freeman in Berkshire; he was engaged as whipper-in at Berkeley in 1826, and in a few years was promoted to the post which he now holds. In the field and in the kennel, his talent is well known; out of it, a more steady, well-conducted, civil, obliging, and respectable man cannot exist. The two whipper-ins are Charles Turner from the Ledbury, and John Cummings from the Lyneham.

The average number of foxes killed in each season may be estimated at rather more than fifty-five brace; they certainly increase annually, making allowance for variations in bad years, such as that of 1851 and 1852. It is impossible they should be preserved with greater attention in any hunt. With the exception of one individual in the Broadway country, whose name is not worthy to be mentioned, there is not a landed proprietor, game preserver, or farmer, who is not favourably disposed towards fox-hunting; although very few of the latter class join in the chase.

There is certainly no rank or station in life

which is not represented in the hunting-field, and this country affords an example in the extraordinary zeal and devotion of four decided characters, who seem to form the link. Three of them are gone, it is to be hoped, to the land where "all good hunters go." The first of these whom I shall introduce, is Mr. Jerry Hawkins, better known in his own neighbourhood as "Jerry Hawkins," one of that respectable class commonly denominated gentlemen farmers. He lived on his own estate, and devoted all his energies to fox-hunting; any other species of hunting he held in sovereign contempt. If the likeness of a sportsman on horseback is seen portrayed on an ale-jug or cider-cup, of the old-fashioned brown ware, it may be taken for granted to be a representation of Jerry Hawkins, in the height of enthusiasm, riding well up to the leading hounds, just as they are running from scent to view into their beaten fox.

Many characteristic anecdotes are related of this worthy sportsman, but I shall confine myself to one circumstance only which marks so strongly his ardent devotion to the chase. Some years before his death, he built a kind of tower or observatory on his property at the Haw, in the most commanding situation, from whence he could obtain a view of the surrounding country; so that, if from old age or sickness he might

not be able to follow hounds on horseback, he would be able to mount his observatory and watch their proceedings. It was an extraordinary precedent, evincing circumspection, and provision for the enjoyment of his only earthly Paradise in the event of accident or infirmity. This worthy, kind-hearted, highly-respected, enthusiastic sportsman died at the age of seventy-one, in the year 1835, without, I am informed, ever having made use of his eccentric Pegasus.

Contemporary with Jerry Hawkins, was Mr. Fretwell, usually known as Tommy Fretwell, who was also at one period engaged in agricultural pursuits, which, however, he relinquished many years since, to enjoy the society of his friends at Cheltenham, where at one period he had the management of a pack of harriers. His name is recorded by the poet Goulburn in his exquisitely amusing and sporting poem, "The Epwell Hunt," descriptive of a run in Warwickshire with the late Mr. Corbet's hounds after a second fox from Epwell to Heythrope in the Duke of Beaufort's Hunt, over a country twenty-three miles in extent, wherein divers disasters "by flood and field" are humorously expressed. After describing the finding of this second fox, and the line he took, the poet continues: —

"From thence, quite determined to give us our fill,
For Swarford he made, and went right up the hill,

Cross'd the road at a speed that made some people stare,
And was fatal, poor Fretwell, alas! to your mare."

The decease of this worthy specimen of the fox-hunter of the "olden time," took place on the 4th of May, 1848, to the great regret of all his brother sportsmen. He was buried at Fladbury.

Whoever has hunted at Cheltenham must have met with the well-known Jem Hastings. His history is singular. He was a man of respectable family; his predecessors having been claimants for the Huntingdon peerage, upon which unsuccessful claim they expended nearly the whole of their substance, leaving the subject of this memoir in reduced circumstances, and he was brought up as a tailor. He seems, however, to have had "hunting blood" in his veins, and preferred the chase of the fox to handling the goose. He followed Lord Fitzhardinge's hounds about five and twenty years, and always on foot; for whether it was in association with his trade or not, I cannot say, but he had an unconquerable aversion to the pig-skin.

One of his first personal essays of a sporting nature, was a frolic which had nearly resulted in a fatal conclusion. Jem owned a terrier dog, and while one of the London coaches was changing horses in the High Street of Cheltenham, he applied "a drag," not to the wheel, but to the hinder part of the vehicle, in the form of a red-herring;

when the coach started, he laid the terrier on the scent. He was soon joined by every cur and mongrel on the line, and Jem cheering on his pack, they entered the Gloucester road in full cry. Excited by the novelty of the pursuit, the horses became unmanageable, and things began to wear a serious aspect, but "the mixed pack" succeeded in running the coach to ground in a ditch near the Pheasant public house, without any serious accident.

The extraordinary distances which he has travelled, appear almost incredible; they are, nevertheless, incontestibly correct. On one occasion, the hounds being at Berkeley, he walked from Cheltenham to the kennels, five and twenty miles, when he found they were gone to Haywood, beyond Thornbury, nine miles further, to which place he followed them, and was in time to see the day's sport. The most wonderful performance was one day when they were in the Broadway country. He walked from Cheltenham, which is sixteen miles, and on to the covert side, a moiety of that distance; he followed the hounds all day, and was with them when they killed their fox after a run of twelve miles. He then went back to Broadway, twenty miles, and from thence to Cheltenham. Not contented with this, by way of finishing the day, he went badger-hunting at night in Queen's Wood and West

Wood, adding some eight or ten miles to his day's work; and in the course of the time he must have gone over upwards of eighty miles of ground. Of what use would a railway have been to such an untiring specimen of human nature? In 1851, "he shuffled off his mortal coil," and was "earthed" in Charlton Churchyard.

Samuel Cornock, frequently announced as "Mister Samuel Cornock of North Nibley, near Berkeley, in the county of Gloucester," is another of those persons in whom the love of hunting prevails above all other considerations. Sammy boasts of no aristocratic parentage; his father having been a weaver, an occupation which prevails extensively in the clothing districts of the west. At an early age, he was apt to get off self-hunting with the hounds kept by the late Earl Berkeley, when they were in their home country, for which insubordination his father was wont to hunt him round the room with a stick; but the earl, noticing the boy, often gave him a shilling, which had the effect of a peace-offering with his parents. He attends the Earl Fitzhardinge's hounds when in the Berkeley country, but has seldom gone to Cheltenham; and when they are absent, "he hunts with the duke;" his costume is the coat of whichever hunt is honoured by his presence- -a present of course from one of the members; the skirts of which

he preserves with great diligence and care by fastening them in front to prevent their being splashed; a white "tile" surmounts the whole. He mentions having gone, some years since, to meet the Duke of Beaufort's hounds at Draycott Park, more than eighteen miles, "to covert." They had a capital run with their first fox, which they killed, and they ran a second a considerable time when, having ten miles to trudge home, he left them. This, he says, was the hardest day's work he ever experienced. He has gone twenty miles to meet hounds in the morning, with the same distance to return; but he does not appear ever to have accomplished the feat of his contemporary Jem Hastings. Not to be behind in the fashion, Mister Samuel Cornock visited the Exhibition, availing himself of the opportunity of paying his respects to his aristocratic sporting patrons. On the day on which her Majesty attended to close the Session of Parliament, a noble lord introduced him to the care of a policeman, in order that he might be placed in a situation where he would most advantageously "see and be seen." Attired in the coat of the Berkeley Hunt, which is of scarlet with a black velvet collar, having a flying fox embroidered thereon in silver and gold, a pair of white cords, and new leggings, he failed not to attract notice; albeit, it is reported, that some of the ignorant cockney juveniles who swarm on

such occasions, accosted him with their impudent slang, in the supposition that he was a rat-catcher. He was safely conducted into the park by his friendly guide, the policeman, and placed between two Life-guardsmen, with instructions from a high authority, that they should preserve such space for Mister Samuel Cornock of North Nibley, as would protect him from inconvenience. Thus guarded, he awaited the approach of the royal carriage, upon which he took off his hat, and waving it with an attitude similar to that which he would adopt when endeavouring to cap the hounds to a scent, gave three hearty and loyal view-halloos, which he declares, and no doubt conscientiously believes, her Majesty was graciously pleased to acknowledge with smiling approbation.

The Earl Fitzhardinge's hunting appointments not being advertised in the Berkeley country, Sammy is employed to make them known to the gentlemen who reside in the neighbourhood; for which, and other similar services, he is liberally remunerated by his lordship, independently of the presents which he receives.

What was Cheltenham when Earl Fitzhardinge, then Colonel Berkeley, first hunted the country? and what would Cheltenham now be, compared to what it is, had it not been for his lordship's patronage and influence, and the attraction of his lordship's hounds? I can remember the place

when, as a schoolboy, I spent part of the mid-summer holidays there in 1816, which was a few years after his lordship commenced hunting the country. The High Street formed the principal portion of the embryo town, and, with the exception of a few small, straggling houses, did not extend, in the direction of the London road, further than the Plough Hotel. It is not necessary to describe Cheltenham as it now stands; neither will I go so far as to assert that it would not have increased in size very considerably, even if Lord Fitzhardinge had not given it his support; but it certainly would not have increased to anything like its present extent, or with equal rapidity, had it not been fostered by his lordship. As it became a hunting quarter, many gentlemen made it, if not their usual, at all events their winter residence. Thus society increased; and the town, which, as a fashionable watering place, was only frequented during a few months, in course of time was made a place of resort throughout the whole year. Here all classes, from the peer to the retired tradesman, may meet with society suitable to their condition. At all times considerate of the welfare of Cheltenham, Earl Fitzhardinge has countenanced a pack of stag-hounds, to fill up the interregnum when his own hounds are absent, and has always been very liberal in supplying them with deer. This year they have been

discontinued. His lordship never kept race-horses, although friendly disposed to the race-meetings, and strongly opposed to the tenets of those who at one time denounced them, and, in fact, all other manly and national amusements. The Cheltenham Steeple Chases were formerly sanctioned by his lordship giving several cups to be run for, with the view, no doubt, that it would confer a benefit on the town; but this custom has been abandoned for some years, which, when the practices connected with steeple chasing are considered, is a result not calculated to create any surprise. The sporting community resorting to Cheltenham have on two occasions expressed their acknowledgments of his lordship's kindness and liberality in hunting the country by the presentation of pieces of plate; the first in the year 1826, and the other in 1852. There are, however, many others, whose interests are immediately blended with the prosperity of Cheltenham, from whom some similar expressions of gratitude and respect would not be inappropriate.

Previously to the Earl Fitzhardinge commencing to keep hounds, part of the country in the neighbourhood of Corse Lawn was hunted by Major Bland, who also hunted a considerable portion of Worcestershire; a country which has not been without hounds for many years, and, although a provincial district, is capable of affording much

sport. After having the Quorn hounds two seasons, the late Lord Foley hunted the Worcestershire country a similar period. Richard Foster officiated as huntsman, and he was for many years afterwards with the H. H. in the same capacity. Colonel Newnham had the hounds several seasons till 1818, on whose retirement Mr. Hornyhold took them and afforded a vast deal of sport. Kit Atkinson was the huntsman, John King first and Joe Maiden the second whip. Having hunted the country five seasons; and also occasionally that portion of what is now called the Albrighton, in the vicinity of Stew Poney, to the great regret of all the sporting inhabitants, Mr. Hornyhold broke up his establishment. A subscription, zealously encouraged by Lord Deerhurst, was then entered into, and the country placed under the management of Mr. Parker, who with slender means contrived to get together a scratch pack. The kennels during the first five years were at Whittington, two miles from Worcester, on the Pershore road, but were subsequently removed to Malvern Wells. He hunted them himself, and although but indifferently mounted, was a first-rate man over a country, and had it not been from want of that which is absolutely essential in a fox-hunting establishment, would have shone above the average of masters of hounds. Struggling in difficulties, he kept them on till the spring of 1832,

when from want of funds they were given up. Mr. Clutton Brock then came forward, and with an increased subscription undertook the management. A kennel was provided at Henwick, and the horses were kept in Worcester. William Carter was engaged as huntsman, and a fair average amount of sport followed; but the subscriptions not being adequate to the expenditure in the course of four seasons, Mr. Brock signified his intention of resigning. Under these circumstances, considering the deficiency of subscription, the indifference of several landed proprietors, and the known hostility of one to the preservation of foxes in his coverts, which are in the very centre of the country, it was apprehended there would be no hounds. At the eleventh hour, Captain Candler came forward, and offered his services, which were gladly accepted. This gentleman had been for several years a resident in the county, occasionally appearing in the field, without, as it was supposed, taking any interest in hounds or hunting, but he was much esteemed for his friendly and social disposition. A naval officer uninitiated in the mysteries of kennel details had necessarily many difficulties opposed to him; however, in the field his management was most successful. He had a humorous and kind word for every one he met with, and was especially popular with the farmers; thus he succeeded in keeping the country together ten seasons, when

he sold his hounds to Mr. Davenport, who about that time established the North Staffordshire Hunt. Captain Candler resided at Newland, five miles from Worcester, on the road to Malvern, where the kennels were situated. Carter hunted the hounds during the first five or six seasons, and Grant, who had previously lived with Lord Kintore, the remainder of the time. The Worcestershire country was then taken in hand by a committee, of whom Mr. Cookes and Mr. Edward Dixon were the active members. Kennels were then built at Rankswood, a short distance on the east of the ancient city; and they are very central. This lasted only about three or four seasons, when Colonel Clowes came forward, and has had the management ever since. I have never seen the hounds since that gentleman has had them, but from report am led to believe they are a very effective, useful lot. William Stansby, who was for many years first whip at Badminton, has hunted the Worcestershire hounds several seasons with great success, and cannot fail to know the essential qualities of a fox-hound, and the necessity for condition. The second whip is spoken of in high terms for his assiduous attention to the hounds, and observance of his duties in assisting the huntsman. Worcestershire is indifferently circumstanced with respect to walks; recourse must therefore be had to other kennels for young hounds,

and an annual draft from Earl Fitzhardinge has assisted in making up the deficiency.

Very few countries present greater attractions for fox-hunting than the Vale of White Horse, and this arises from two causes —the natural capabilities of the country, and the celebrity of the masters of hounds who have at various times occupied it. I understand it has been enlivened with the cheering notes of horn and hound from a very early date; but by whom it was hunted I am not in a position to state (unless it was by the late Lord Berkeley), prior to Mr. Codrington, who commenced in or about the year 1813. This gentleman has been represented as a very superior sportsman of his day, and he continued till 1824, when Mr. Harvey Coombe entered upon it, and hunted it conjointly with the Old Berkeley for three seasons. Lord Kintore had it a similar period, when the late Earl Ducie, then the Honourable Henry Moreton, succeeded, which brings us to the year 1830, and it was during the latter part of the time his lordship hunted it that I had several opportunities of meeting the hounds from Cheltenham. Lord Ducie engaged in an arduous undertaking--that of forming a pack from drafts. He had, however, an able assistant in Jem Hills as first whipper-in, till the establishment of the Heythrope hounds, when he left the Vale of White Horse, to become huntsman to the former

pack. Thompson and John Grant were then engaged to turn the hounds to his lordship's horn. The first kennel which these hounds occupied was at Farringdon; but subsequently they were removed to new ones built at the entrance to Oakley Park, about a mile from Cirencester, and they have been occupied ever since. Lord Ducie commenced principally with drafts from the Duke of Beaufort, Mr. Osbaldeston, and Mr. Thomas Assheton Smith. The blood of Mr. Osbaldeston's kennel was in great favour, and of late years much of Mr. Horlock's was introduced. His lordship's taste was for large, slashing hounds, and he appeared to adopt as the model the largest of Mr. Osbaldeston's, and the most symmetrical of Mr. Horlock's. They were more distinguishable for usefulness than beauty. Many masters of hounds, especially young beginners, fall into great error by drafting too much for appearances. It is much easier to breed, or to form a pack from drafts that shall be unexceptionable to the eye, than it is to get together such as are intrinsically good. To effect all the combinations of superiority requires time, money, and experience. Any man accustomed to hounds may go into a strange kennel, and select those which are the handsomest, but it is impossible for him to choose the best workers, and such as are most useful in killing foxes, without seeing them in the field,

and knowing something of their blood; even then, unless he possess considerable judgment, he will not be able to form a correct opinion.

It has been remarked by a very excellent judge that to be perfect, a pack should consist of hounds gifted with various accomplishments. This observation is extremely just, providing vices are carefully excluded. There are hounds very clever at finding their foxes which are not very superior in chase; others good in chase which have not the notion of finding; some which can pick out a very cold scent which are not famed for speed—qualities which are often hereditary. The happy combination of individuals gifted with different properties constitutes an effective pack; for it is rarely to be found, that all the good qualities are centred in one hound; and if a young beginner can attain what is requisite towards finding and killing his foxes, he must be contented to compromise a little with appearances.

Lord Ducie's zeal in hunting the country was unbounded, and unfortunately it was too great for his constitution. Frequently travelling long distances to covert, generally in an open gig, sometimes borrowing a few hours from the night, exposed to the wet, in that state having to encounter the exertion of hunting his own hounds, with a constitutional predisposition to gout, rheumatic disorders ensued, and in the spring of 1842,

his lordship lent his hounds to Lord Henry Bentinck, in the hope that rest might restore his health—a hope, however, that was unfortunately never realised. Devotedly attached to rural engagements, Lord Ducie turned his attention to agricultural pursuits, and conferred lasting obligations on the farming community by his excellent judgment and example, till on the 2nd of June, 1853, his lordship departed this life at his seat Tortworth, Gloucestershire, to the infinite regret of the surrounding neighbourhood.

The second year of Lord Ducie's hunting the country, a considerable alteration was made in the extent of it. In fact, it was divided, when a new one was established, and hunted with a subscription by Mr. Parker, but only for one season, when it was taken by Lord Radnor, subsequently by Mr. Moreland, and is now hunted by Mr. Morrel. This is what is called the Old Berkshire country. Some misunderstanding as to the limits took place during the period Lord Gifford hunted the Vale of White Horse, which, being settled, it is unnecessary to explain. The present boundaries may be thus described. Aldsworth is the extreme northern point of meeting, where the Heythrope country joins, bearing off in an easterly direction. The River Cole forms the line of demarcation on the extreme east from the

Old Berkshire; Wroughton and Burdrope Park are the furthermost fixtures on the south, about five miles from which is Albourne Chase, in the Craven Hunt. Charlton Park, Crudwell, and Jackaments Bottom, join on the south-west and west, with the Duke of Beaufort's country, when bearing from west to north-west, comes Earl Fitzhardinge's Cheltenham district. Foss Cross is the usual place of meeting, when the Vale of White Horse hounds draw his lordship's Chedworth and Withington Woods.

There are several places of meeting which may be readily reached from London by the Great Western Railway, especially those which are near to Swindon, Purton, and Minety stations, the principal of which are Wroughton, Stratton, Lydiard Park, Cold Harbour, Red Lodge, Minety Pound, Eastcourt, Crudwell, and Charlton Turnpike. Any London sportsman who has not visited this country, will be amply repaid for a trifling additional expense and exertion in reaching it.

Lord Gifford, who had the year previously established a pack of hounds to hunt the Ludlow country, removed them into the Vale of White Horse in 1842, and occupied the same kennels, stables, and premises which Lord Ducie had used. No country could be better adapted for Lord Gifford than this, neither could any one be better adapted for the country than his lordship, who of

course hunted the hounds himself, and was whipped-in to by John Grant, who had been in Lord Ducie's service many years previously to his being entered as a whipper-in. The most severe day I ever saw with hounds was with Lord Gifford's on the 27th of February, 1843. They met at Crudwell, where they found. I was not sufficiently acquainted with the country to register the precise line at the time, but they ran to Somerford Common, Webb's Wood, Flaxland, Ravensroost, Red Lodge, Minety, and finally whipped off at dark when running for Charlton Pond; having been hard at work upwards of four hours, and the land being very wet and deep, much distress prevailed among the horses.

During the three years which Lord Gifford hunted the country, the sport was very superior. His lordship's best energies were zealously devoted to the service; with John Grant for his whipper-in, it was not possible to conceive anything more effective; and every sportsman in the hunt felt serious regret when the noble lord expressed his intention to resign.

The management of the hounds then devolved on a committee, with Mr. Cripps as master of the ceremonies in the field; and, subsequently, Mr. Barker. John Grant was engaged as huntsman the first season, after which he went to Lord Parker till 1847, when his old master, Lord Gifford, taking

the H. H., he was again engaged to whip-in to his lordship. Grant was succeeded in the Vale of White Horse establishment by John Dinnicombe, who remained there till after Mr. Villebois took the country, which was in 1850. Boothroyd, on the Donnington country being re-united with the Quorn, hunted Mr. Villebois' hounds one season; and, in 1852, Christopher Atkinson, more commonly known by the name of Kit, who had whipped-in some twelve or thirteen years in Earl Fitzhardinge's establishment, was engaged as huntsman. His career, poor fellow, was a short one. He died, after a short illness, on the 30th November, 1853.

Last season was Kit's first essay as huntsman, and report spoke highly in his praise. It sometimes happens that a very superior whipper-in makes but an indifferent huntsman; but Kit had every opportunity of gaining experience. His father, who was a thorough-bred Yorkshireman, at an early age entered into the service of Sir Bellingham Graham, and whipped-in to the baronet, I believe, first of all in the Badsworth, and afterwards in the Atherstone country. When Mr. Hornyhold took the Worcestershire hounds, he engaged the elder Kit as huntsman, and upon that gentleman's resignation, he went to the Surrey Union; from thence to Mr., now Lord, Portman, in Dorsetshire, where he first entered

his son in the mysteries of woodcraft. When scarcely, if any, more than fourteen years of age, he officiated as whipper-in to his father.

However the celebrated masters of this hunt have distinguished themselves for liberality, talent, and enthusiastic zeal to afford sport, none can have excelled Mr. Villebois, the gentleman who now hunts the country. He is the nephew of two masters of fox-hounds, whose names have long been renowned — the late Mr. J. Villebois, who hunted the Hampshire, and Mr. F. Villebois, the Craven countries. This gentleman's father also kept stag-hounds. Most of Mr. Villebois' predecessors hunted the hounds themselves, but this duty is now deputed to a professional huntsman.

The Vale of White Horse has always been a great acquisition to the sportsmen frequenting Cheltenham during the months when Lord Fitzhardinge's hounds are absent. The railway, which passes through the country, is an essential convenience, although it takes somewhat of a circuitous route through Gloucester. There is a great proportion of grass in this hunt, which holds a good scent, the fences are strong, and the land in wet weather is heavy. In the neighbourhood of Aldsworth, Bibury, Foss Cross, Barnesley, the Hare Bushes, and Jackaments Bottom, there is an abundance of stone walls, and more ploughed land. The prin-

cipal woods are close to the kennels, at the extremity of Oakley Park, and they are extremely convenient for cub-hunting. The park is an admirable place to exercise hounds in, as it is full of deer and hares.

The present pack has been formed by Mr. Villebois with a very liberal hand. He commenced with large drafts from the Earls Fitzhardinge and Fitzwilliam, and he also purchased the Herefordshire hounds when Mr. Symons gave up that country.

CHAP. X.

Shropshire as a Sporting County.—Breed of Horses.—Shrewsbury Horse-fair.—Sporting Farmers.—Habits acquired from local Influences.—Celebrated Salopian Sportsmen.—The late Mr. George Forester.—The late Mr. Childe.—The late Lord Forester.—Lord Forester.—The late Lord Hill.—The late Sir John Hill.—Colonel Hill.—Sir Rowland Hill.—Comparison with Leicestershire.—The late Mr. Corbet.—Mr. Lyster.—The late Mr. Lloyd and his Son.—The late Colonel Gatacre.—The late Mr. George Aston.—The late Mr. T. A. Pudsey.—Mr. J. A. Pudsey.—The late Mr. Thomas Baker.—The late Mr. E. Botterel.—The late Mr. W. Bate.—The late Mr. W. Smith and his Pupils.—George Carter.—Joseph Maiden.—His Accident.—His Success in breeding Hounds.—The Formation of the North Staffordshire Pack.—George Mountford.—Tom Moody and his Eccentricities.—William Barrow.—The late Mr. Forester.—The Wheatland Hounds.—An Interregnum.—Description of the Hounds in 1822.—Re-establishment of the Wheatland Hunt.—Mr. Baker.—Derivation of the Title.—Description of the Country.—Mr. Pelham.—Sir Edward Smythe and his first Pack of Hounds.—The late Mr. Mytton and his Country.—His ride to Covert.—Black and White Stockings.—Mr. Mytton's Attire.—Rides a Post-horse across the Country.—An Exploit: crossing the Severn.—Finale in a Ditch.—Mr. Mytton's Freaks and Fancies.—An Aphorism.—The late Sir Richard Pulestone.—Shropshire Hunt Kennels.—Sir Bellingham Graham.—The Whipper-ins.—Shropshire Hunt Committee.—Division of the Country.—Mr. Hodson.—Mr. Eyton.—Sir Watkin Williams Wynn.—John Walker.—The Country.—Mr. Baker in the South Shropshire Country.—An extraordi-

nary Run. — Mr. Corbet.—Another Run in the Wheatland Country. — The Ludlow Country. — Former Masters. — The late Mr. Stubbs.—An Anecdote.—An Explanation. —Mr. Sitwell. — Nature of the Country. — Clee Hills. — Singular Customs.—The Clee Hill Colliers.—Riding on the Clee Hills.—The Maesmawr Pack. —The United Pack. — Description of a Hound. —The Albrighton Country. —The late Earl Stamford and Warrington. —The late Sir Richard Pulestone.—Colonel Newnham.—Mr. Hornyhold.—Atkinson. —King.—Maiden.—A long Day.— Sir Bellingham Graham. —Magnificent Establishment.—Mr. Boycott.—Zac. Goddard. —Skinner.—Over-riding Hounds.—Mr. Boycott's Tact.—Mr. Walter Gifford. —The Albrighton Kennels.— Beardshaw. — Pugh. — Kennel Lameness. — Ineffectual Remedies. — Sir Thomas Boughey.—Changes of Kennel, and the good Effect. —William Wells.—Sir Thomas Boughey as a Huntsman.— Mr. Thomas Holyoake.—Kennel Lameness again.—Remarks thereon. — Successful Remedies in Mr. Jasper's and Mr. Robert's Kennels. —The Pack and their Condition. — Earl Stamford and Warrington.—Staples.—The Honourable Arthur Wrottesley.— Mr. Hellier.— Superiority of his Hounds. — Somervile's Opinion. — Beckford's Opinion. —The Blood of Mr. Hellier's Hounds. — Description of the Albrighton Country.—Fox-preserving.— George Burgess.—Extent and Boundaries of the Country.

FEW counties offer more attractions to the sportsman than Shropshire. Without investing it with the highest rank as a fox-hunting country, it presents the charms of variety. The fisherman has ample opportunities for exercising the gentle art in the Severn, the Teme, the Corve, the Worfe, the Rea, and some other tributary streams. There are various parts which vie with Norfolk

for partridge-shooting, especially in the neighbourhood of Shiffnal, extending thence on the borders of Staffordshire to Shipley, Enville, and Bridgenorth, on the eastern banks of the Severn. The county of Salop stands very high in estimation for the breed of horses, in which we must include the adjoining parts of Herefordshire, Montgomeryshire, and Radnorshire. This distinction has, perhaps, of late years been somewhat in abeyance in consequence of the apprehension that the demand for horses would fail as railroads became prevalent, and therefore, there have not been so many bred; but that fear being now dispelled, the energies of breeders are again in the ascendant. The recent establishment of an annual fair, which takes place early in March, exclusively for the sale of horses, which continues three days, will, no doubt, tend to encourage the breeding of horses. There is no other place more worthy of patronage by those who wish to purchase well-bred and useful animals. Most of the breeding farmers are sportsmen; they ride their young horses with hounds, while the diversified nature of the country and the fences are particularly adapted to inculcate perfection in the accomplishments of the hunter.

It is a natural inference, that where the state of a country is adapted and inviting for sport, the inhabitants should be distinguished for their

sporting propensities. By habit, sporting becomes an acquirement, metaphorically, indigenous to the soil. Shropshire may justly boast of being the native land of a greater number of sportsmen of high caste and repute than any other county in England of equal magnitude; among whom may be introduced the late Mr. George Forester of Willey Park, who hunted the country during the latter part of the past, and at the commencement of the present century, cotemporary with Mr. Meynell and Mr. Corbet; and if he did not enjoy the advantages of so good a country as theirs to exercise his talent in, he was by no means deficient in zeal and enthusiastic love of fox-hunting.

His country must, like most others in those days, have been very extensive; for including a great portion of what is now called the Shropshire, he had the coverts at Enville, Dudmaston, and Apley, in the present Albrighton Hunt.

This gentleman's nephew, the late Lord Forester, who succeeded to the estates on the death of the Squire of Willey, in 1811, also a Salopian, when known as Mr. Forester, was a distinguished rider to hounds in Leicestershire; and likewise his friend the late Mr. Childe of Kinlet, characterised in those days by the title of the "Flying Childe," from the pace at which he rode over the country. These two gentlemen are said to have introduced

the fashion of hard riding, which has increased up to a more recent date. "It is the pace that kills," was an expression made use of by Lord Forester; a truism universally correct. The present Lord Forester, so well known in Leicestershire, is another nobleman who graces the list of Shropshire sportsmen. The gallant Lord Hill patronised fox-hunting on all occasions, and the late Sir John Hill, Bart., of Hawkestone, the father of so many valiant sons who attracted the notice of their sovereign, was a master of hounds several seasons; also his son, Colonel Hill. Sir Rowland Hill hunted the North of Shropshire from 1834 to 1838, and several other masters of hounds whose names will be introduced in regular order. In fact, the only one who has hunted this country not being a county man, was Sir Bellingham Graham; and it is somewhat singular, that in only one instance has the Quorn country ever been hunted, except by one gentleman, Mr. Greene, who was a county man. It appears almost unnecessary to remark, that the late Mr. Corbet of Sundorne, renowned as the most celebrated master of fox-hounds ever known in Warwickshire, was a Salopian.

Without including those reckless riders who by their jealousy are constantly pressing upon hounds, and calling forth bursts of just anathemas from masters, there are many of first-rate celebrity in

this accomplishment — and as an accomplishment it must be fairly recognised when tempered with sportsman-like discretion — who claim Shropshire as the county of their birth. Mr. John Lyster, of Rowton Castle, ranks as one of the very best performers over a country of this or any other age. Without over-riding hounds, he is always with them, let the pace or the difficulties be what they may. The late Mr. Lloyd, of Aston, was equally good; and his son, I am informed, inherits the same properties. The late Colonel Gatacre, of Gatacre Hall, on the Bridgenorth side, the respected colonel of the militia during many years, was a fine horseman, an excellent sportsman, and a most estimable, worthy specimen of the English country gentleman. He lived to attain the good old age of eighty-one, and was taken from his family, his friends, and his country in 1849, an event which occasioned the most unfeigned regret.

The list of distinguished sportsmen, natives of Shropshire, has yet to be increased with the names of the late Mr. George Aston, formerly of Newton, but since of Seisdon, in the county of Stafford: also his two brothers, the late Mr. Thomas Aston Pudsey, and his successor, Mr. John Aston Pudsey. No three so nearly related ever did greater honours to the science of sporting equestrianism. To make a comparison would be invidious; they

were all equally good over a country; and without occasioning the mischief which hard riders are prone to do, were always in the front rank when pace told in its effects. Mr. George Aston departed this life, to the extreme regret of his friends, in September last. The late Mr. Thomas Baker, brother of the gentleman who now hunts the Wheatland country, was equally good; and the late Mr. Edward Botterel was an extraordinary powerful and daring horseman. There were likewise two clergymen who did much honour to the "noble science." Though not assuming to unbecoming emulation as bruising riders, their steady advocacy of fox-hunting was unremitting, and the names of the Reverends William Bate of Willey, and William Smith of Badger, well deserve to be handed down to posterity. Mr. Smith was the preceptor, or private tutor of the late Mr. Hugh Campbell, a gentleman deservedly distinguished in Warwickshire; and also of Mr. Thomas Clutton Brock, for several years master of the Worcestershire hounds. Shropshire has also produced three very celebrated huntsmen; George Carter, formerly huntsman to the Duke of Grafton, and now with Mr. Thomas Assheton Smith; Joseph Maiden was born on the Willey estate and commenced with Mr. Whitmore of Apley, where, as a boy, he whipped-in to a pack of harriers; from thence he went to whip-in for Mr. Hornyhold in

Worcestershire, and on that gentleman giving up his hounds, accompanied Kit Atkinson to the Surrey Union. He was also a short time with Mr. Hay in Warwickshire, and became huntsman to Mr. Shaw, near Lichfield, where he met with a most serious and painful accident—one which would have deterred most men from following the chase, and which unhappily he feels the effects of to this day; but his courage is undaunted. He was in the act of taking a piece of flesh from the boiler, and standing over it for that purpose, the flesh-fork slipped, and he fell into the boiling broth, dreadfully scalding his legs and thighs; but he recovered from the accident, and went to hunt the Cheshire hounds for Sir Harry Mainwaring and the subsequent masters, till after Captain White took them, when he entered upon the quieter life of an inn-keeper at Sandiway Head. Upon the North Staffordshire hounds being established, he again returned to "active service." In the cabalistic engagement of breeding hounds he has been eminently successful, and he has had more than one occasion of putting his talent to the test. Having brought the Cheshire hounds to a state of great perfection, they were attacked with the fearful disorder called kennel madness, and in consequence nearly the whole of the pack fell a sacrifice. This was soon after Captain White had them. It was then necessary to form a fresh

pack. When the North Staffordshire hounds were established, Maiden had to renew his labours. In 1845, he commenced with drafts from the Duke of Rutland's, Lords Yarborough's, Chesterfield's, and Ducie's; Messrs. Foljambe's, Osbaldeston's, Hodgson's and Horlock's kennels; principally from Mr. Foljambe's, but in all, only five and twenty couples. The following year an augmentation was effected by the purchase of the Worcestershire hounds, but there is not much of that blood now left. From the reports I have heard, Maiden has once more succeeded in forming a very superior pack. George Mountford, who for several years hunted the Quorn hounds, was also a Shropshire man. The eccentric Tom Moody, who was whipper-in for Mr. Forester, must not be forgotten; there are many curious anecdotes related of him in the county, one of which exemplifies the ready tact which he possessed when in what is termed "a fix." Endeavouring to cross one of the dingles, which are numerous in the neighbourhood of Willey, his horse fell upon him, and he was unable to extricate himself, whereupon he gave one of his well-known "view halloos," and expecting a fox was on foot, his master hastened to the spot. Although Tom continued hallooing, he was invisible, when Mr. Forester inquired which way the fox was gone. "I have not seen any fox," said the whipper-in; "but I am at

the bottom of the dingle, with my horse on the top of me, and I knew a halloo was the most likely means of calling some one to my assistance." This ardent sportsman commenced his career with Mr. Chambers, of Whitburne Court, on the borders of Herefordshire and Worcestershire, from whom he went to Mr. Forester, and lived with that gentleman several years. He then went to Mr. Corbet, and whipped-in, a season or two, to William Barrow; but returned to Mr. Forester, and died in that gentleman's service November 29th, 1796. His remains are deposited in Barrow churchyard. William Barrow, the celebrated huntsman to Mr. Corbet's hounds, must be added to the list.

You cannot enter the good old county of Salop, where it is bounded by Worcestershire and Staffordshire, and converse with any of the old inhabitants who have any taste for sporting subjects, but they will tell you some anecdotes of the Squire Forester of Willey, and his no less celebrated whipper-in Tom Moody, whose proficiency in and ardour for the chase are so quaintly expressed in the well-known song which bears his name. Mr. Forester being undeniably the oldest master of fox-hounds in this county, he, and those who succeeded him, must be mentioned in rotation. I have no means of determining the precise date when this gentleman first established his hounds, but

from circumstances which have been related to me, I have reason to believe he commenced about the year 1775, and that he kept them upwards of thirty years. It was his custom to be at the covert side before sunrise, so that he might commence operations at the first dawn of day. The rough country about the Wrekin was his favourite spot, one which modern fox-hunters are not prone to admire. Mr. Forester died in 1811. About that period a pack was established by subscription at Bridgenorth, when it was called the Wheatland Hunt. Mr. Skelding had the principal management, and was joined by Mr. Thomas Baker, the elder brother of the present master; the late Mr. George Aston; his brothers, the late Mr. Thomas Aston Pudsey, and Mr. John Aston Pudsey, the latter of whom is still one of the most ardent sportsmen in the Albrighton Hunt. It was distinguished as a most convivial and sporting coterie, and continued till about the year 1818; Mr. Skelding having previously resigned his post as huntsman to one John Chorlton, a kind of amateur yeoman, and the death of Mr. Thomas Baker taking place, the hunt was broken up. The taste for hunting is innate in the inhabitants of this soil, and the farmers kept the hounds on for several seasons, some in a small kennel under the care of the aforesaid John Chorlton, who still acted as the huntsman, and the others at the farm-houses, from whence they were

collected on the morning of hunting. The late Sir Richard Acton, of Aldenham, gave them his countenance; in fact, it was his tenants who were the principal supporters of the hounds, and they were used both for hunting the foxes, and for the purpose of taking the deer which escaped from the park, to facilitate which a few couples of blood-hounds were introduced. The late Lord Forester also patronised them; and, through his lordship's interest, drafts were occasionally procured from the Belvoir kennel. By that means, and breeding a few among themselves, they managed to keep up a small scratch pack. It may readily be understood that they set more value upon a hound that could hunt a very cold scent, than one which could go a great pace, and recourse was had to crossing with the blood-hound. I can well remember hunting with them in the year 1822, when the pack at the covert side was composed somewhat after the following fashion: — About six couples of well-bred fox-hounds, three or four couples of the cross between fox-hounds and blood-hounds, and two couples of true-bred blood-hounds. It was highly entertaining to observe them in chase; by the time they had run a mile or two, the fox-hounds would be several fields a-head; at a respectful distance came the half-bred ones, toiling in vain to reach their more speedy companions; behind them came the blood-hounds, ever and anon, as they

touched upon the scent, throwing their tongues with sonorous, deep-toned melody, sometimes actually sitting on their haunches, evidently indulging their olfactory sensibilities. When the leading hounds came to a check, those which had been following in the rear had a chance of getting up, and if the check was of long duration, the tender-nosed blood hounds would sometimes recover the line; but if it was a good scenting day, they scarcely participated in the performance. This was quite enough to enable any unprejudiced person to decide upon the superiority of the fox-hound; but still some of the old worthies would contend that the blood-hounds were serviceable in hitting off a very cold scent. If they could have been carried to the place where they were wanted, they would no doubt have been useful; but having to travel on foot, they were not, being blown and half beaten before they arrived. At the same time, I believe that a distant cross would be an improvement in the kennels of several of our high-bred packs, but it would take many years to acquire it. In this manner some of the hounds now in the Wheatland kennels are bred, but it is more than five and twenty years since the addresses of the blood-hounds have been discontinued. Stud hounds from the Belvoir, Cheshire, and other celebrated establishments, were used, and thus the deficiency of symmetry, speed, activity, and endu-

rance has been obviated. If extraordinary sport is a test of the excellence of a pack of hounds (and I cannot conceive a more conclusive one), they are certainly very superior. It is quite clear that four or five strains of the true fox-hound are necessary to get rid of the imperfections of the blood-hound.

In 1843 a subscription was entered into, when the management of the Wheatland hounds was confided to Mr. Baker, and from that period they have occupied kennels at Bridgenorth. This gentleman's attention to the improvement of the pack since he has had the management of them, has been amply repaid. Born in the country, and accustomed to following hounds from his boyhood, he knows every field in it; and, what is of more importance to a huntsman, he knows the run of the foxes. This affords an opportunity for observing, that much excellent sport may be obtained without a lavish expenditure of money, providing things are well conducted; and also that it may be accomplished in a country of limited extent, if foxes are well preserved. Shropshire is a country whose sons are proverbially zealous sportsmen, and in no portion of it is it more conspicuous than in that which comprises the Wheatland Hunt. To persons not acquainted with the locality, it may be an object of inquiry, why it should have received the title. It is a provincial term among the inhabitants to distinguish it from the turnip and barley soil,

extending a considerable distance on the eastern banks of the River Severn, and which is hunted by the Albrighton hounds. The difference between the two countries is very remarkable and interesting, considering that the river only marks the distinction. Approaching the picturesque borough of Bridgenorth, either from Shiffinal, Wolverhampton, Stourbridge, or Kidderminster, land of a very light, loamy, and sandy character prevails, and, with the exception of a small portion of strong land near Alam Bridge, six miles from Bridgenorth, on the Kidderminster road, the light soil extends from twelve to fifteen miles. Having crossed the Severn, and passed through Bridgenorth, the strong clay presents itself, where the cultivation of wheat and beans forms the principal portion of the farmer's care; there is, however, a fair quantity of grass, and the country is favourable to scent. Half way between the last-named town and Ludlow, is the Brown Clee Hill, a favourite resort of foxes; and a horse that can live with hounds to that point, on a good scenting day, from Spoonhill Wood, Monk Hopton, Lightwood, Middleton Gorse, Wallsbatch Gorse, or Sidbury Coppice, must be in good condition, formed of the right materials, and able to go in any country in England. This country is not much approved of by the generality of those sportsmen who belong to the Albrighton Hunt; compared with that it is

rough in the extreme. Heavy land, strong fences, numerous dingles, which can only be crossed at certain places, known but to a chosen few of the natives, now and then deep brooks and perpendicular banks, are formidable impediments to those who are accustomed to light fences, sound ground, a very few brooks, and no dingles.

At one period a great portion of the county of Salop was hunted by Mr. Pelham of Cound Hall, a gentleman of high honour, and amusing, eccentric devices. It was his pleasure to attire his servants in white hunting-coats, which, as I am informed, being cleaned with pipe-clay, maintained their purity of appearance; but a fall must most assuredly have illustrated the Latin quotation, "color, qui albus erat, nunc est contrarius albo." This gentleman has been known to amuse himself with the exercise of breaking stones, in order to demonstrate the exact quantity a labourer ought to operate upon in the course of the day. The numerous pleasantries in which Mr. Pelham indulged were more generally diversified than appertaining to the sports of the field, and therefore not precisely presentable in these pages.

Another part of the country was hunted, about the same period, by Sir Edward Smythe, Bart., of Acton Burnell, an excellent sportsman; but what the limits were of this hunt, I cannot precisely identify, nor the exact time when Sir Edward

commenced; but I perfectly well remember meeting his hounds on the 16th of April, at Thatcher's Wood, in the year 1822, as a memorandum in an old note-book supplies me with the reminiscence that it was the last day of the season; an event which, juvenile as I was, impressed me forcibly with regret. This was also Sir Edward Smythe's last day of hunting till his re-commencement in 1831. I imagine the country he hunted must have been what has subsequently gone by the name of the South Shropshire, and a portion of the Wheatland; Thatcher's Wood being in the latter district. These imperfect recollections are strengthened by the fact of Mr. Mytton succeeding Mr. Pelham, either in 1817 or 1818; and Mr. Mytton certainly never hunted any part of the Wheatland, or much, if any, of the South of Shropshire. His country was more in the immediate vicinity of Halston, Atcham Bridge, and Sundorne. A part of what now constitutes the Albrighton country, in the neighbourhood of Ivetsey Bank, where he had kennels, was also hunted by Mr. Mytton, including Chillington, Wrottesley, Pudsey's Gorse, and Morfe. When hunting this district, he would sometimes have a relay of hacks on the road, and ride from his own house, a distance of forty miles, and return after hunting. On one of these occasions, when the hounds met at Weston, he had on one black and

one white silk stocking, which were conspicuous between his white cords and boot tops. Whether he had dressed in the dark, or whether he had ever been in bed, or whether he had put them on for effect, I will not pretend to state. His first exploit was to ride his horse Baronet over the deer hurdles in Weston Park, which were very high and strong, just to ascertain if he was in a jumping mood. I also recollect his coming from Halston on a very wet morning, to meet his hounds at the White Sytche, near Weston, in the year 1820, before waterproof garments were in fashion. The only affectation of protection from rain that he wore over his hunting coat was a tight military surtout, cut according to the existing fashion, with a very short waist; and he was literally as wet as if he had ridden through the Severn. On another occasion he came from Cheltenham in his carriage to an appointment at the Wheelgate. A frost had for several days prevented the hounds from going out, and he resorted to Cheltenham for a lark. It commenced raining in the night, when, ordering horses to his carriage, he set off to the place of meeting. But he was behind time, and the hounds, on his arrival, had gone to draw Morfe Gorse without any horse being left for him; as his servants did not know whether he would come on wheels, or whether he would come at all. There was no approach to within a mile of the

covert for a carriage; consequently he mounted one of the post horses, and with the encumbrance of some of the harness, especially the winker-bridle, he came straight over the fences, arriving at the gorse just in time to see his hounds find their fox, and declared the horse jumped better with winkers than he would have done without them. Ever prone to play some pranks, after a short scurry in the same country, his hounds hunted their fox to the Severn, and crossed at Quatford, where Mytton jumped into the ferry-boat alone, and, having gained the opposite side, sent the boat adrift, thereby precluding the possibility of any other persons crossing. All those who were desirous to see the end of the run had to ride round through Bridgenorth; and we found the Squire of Halston with his horse in a ditch, and the hounds staring about with their heads up, having lost their fox, their huntsman, and their whipper-in. Mr. Mytton ostensibly gave up his hounds in 1822; but he still kept on a sort of scratch pack, with which he hunted near home.

An amusing volume might be composed of Mr. Mytton's freaks and fancies, exclusive of any of his faults, which, unfortunately, have been already too glaringly paraded before the public; but, poor fellow, he is gone to rest, and it is to be hoped his indiscretions have met with more lenient judgment from Heaven than they have from many of

his earthly censors, to whom, and to all others who presume to judge their companions in sin, the 11th verse of the 4th chapter of James is strikingly applicable: "Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law; but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge." On the 9th of April, Anno Domini 1834, his mortal remains were deposited in the family vault at Halston Chapel, at the comparatively early age of thirty-eight.

The late Sir Richard Pulestone, a very distinguished sportsman, considered the best judge of hounds of his time, hunted divers parts of Shropshire, and indeed several other countries, during a period of between thirty and forty years. To point out the various districts and the precise dates would be impossible. During the latter part of the time, he confined his hunting to the neighbourhood of Emral, in Flintshire. I never met his hounds but once, which was at the Twemlows, near Whitchurch, a great many years ago, and have but a very slight recollection of them. Sir Richard Pulestone sold his pack in the spring of 1833, to Lord Radnor, for 500 guineas, when he retired from the field as a master of fox-hounds. He departed this life in 1849.

In 1823, the gentlemen of Shrewsbury and the

neighbourhood built some kennels and stables about two miles from the town; soon after which Sir Bellingham Graham undertook to hunt the Shropshire in conjunction with what was subsequently called the Albrighton country, which he had previously hunted exclusively; but that arrangement only continued one season, the Albrighton men being inconvenienced, every alternate month or six weeks, by not having hounds within their reach; and Sir Bellingham confined his operations to the Shropshire side during the remainder of the time of his keeping hounds. The baronet hunted his hounds in person; and as an amateur huntsman, if he has been equalled, he certainly has not been excelled. He was very ably assisted in the field by William Staples and John Wigglesworth. After having hunted the Atherstone, the Quorn, and the Pytchley countries, it appeared a condescension to hunt a provincial one; but Sir Bellingham introduced every requisite for the promotion of sport, and was most successful in the results.

On Sir Bellingham Graham's retirement, in 1826, he sold his hounds to the committee which was then formed, of whom Sir Edward Smythe, Mr. Lloyd, and Mr. Smythe Owen, were the principals. Staples was appointed as huntsman, and Wigglesworth remained as first whip. This continued till the conclusion of the season 1833, when

the country was divided into North and South. Sir Rowland Hill, Baronet, of Hawkestone, took the former portion, with Staples in his former appointment; the kennels at Lee Bridge being the domicile of the hounds. The southern district was hunted by Mr. Smythe Owen, who promoted Wigglesworth; and kennels were provided at Coundover. Mr. Hodson succeeded, kept the hounds two or three seasons, but gave them up in 1841. Mr. T. C. Eyton subsequently became the master of the southern district, and Sir Watkin Williams Wynn, Baronet, added the northern to an extensive tract of country around Wynnstay, which he now hunts in great style, having the celebrated John Walker, who was for many years with the Fife hounds, as huntsman. This arrangement was entered into in 1849. Sir Watkin Wynn's country is comprised in what may be called the Old Shropshire, verging on the Cheshire and North Staffordshire, with a part of the Carden district, and that near Wynnstay. Mr. Baker undertook to hunt the country vacated by Mr. Eyton, conjointly with the Wheatland; two days in the week being devoted to the former, and one to the latter district. This only continued for one year, but with a very limited subscription he succeeded in showing most extraordinary sport. One of the runs is especially worthy of notice; it took place on the 16th of No-

vember, 1849. The place of meeting was the fifth mile stone on the Baschurch road. The hounds were scarcely in the covert at Merrington, on Mr. Slaney's estate, one of the Members for Shrewsbury, and a most zealous sportsman, when a fox was viewed away by Pearce, the head whip. After taking a ring round the covert, he made a point for Leaton Shelf, best pace; without a moment's hesitation he ran through the covert, straight as possible to Preston Gobalds, and away to Pimhill, Harmer Hill, and Middle Park nearly to Baschurch, when bearing to the right he gained the covert in which he was found at Merrington; through it and again to Leaton Shelf. He then crossed the River Severn, which, although bank full, Mr. Webster of Preen, one of Shropshire's gallant heroes of the chase, plunged into, leaving the whole of the field behind him. This, however, was an unprofitable daring; for having tried a refuge in Bickley Coppice, the fox re-crossed the Severn near Montford Bridge, which afforded Mr. Webster another opportunity for exercising his amphibious qualities. From this point the fox went to Forton, and nearly to Nesscliffe, where he turned to the right by Fitz, with the pack close at his brush; through the gardens at Grafton, when he once more tried the earths at Leaton Shelf, and after a terrific run of nearly four hours' duration, was pulled down near Leaton

Knoll, the residence of J. A. Lloyd, Esq., a small portion of the field only being up to witness the termination. Among the select few were Mr. Baker the present, and Mr. Eyton the late, master of the hounds, Mr. Webster and Mr. Harnage. All the horses were completely beaten, and had it not been for some friendly roads which occasionally intervened, it appears impossible that any could have gone half the distance, which is computed at upwards of thirty miles.

Not finding the subscription adequate to the expenses, Mr. Baker resigned the Shropshire district to Mr. Edward Corbet of Longnor, in 1850, when the latter gentleman purchased five and twenty couples of Mr. Baker's hounds, to commence with, and constructed kennels at Dorrington.

Since that time, Mr. Baker has confined his hunting to the Wheatland country, and although it may be justly termed a rough one, he has contrived to show a vast deal of sport. The following sketch of a run which these hounds had in the memorable wet, but good-scenting season of 1852 and 53, is a specimen of their performance, and conclusive proof of the state of the country. On the 28th of December they met at Stanley, and drew till rather late in the day before they found. A good game fox, however, was in waiting at Willey, which went away across the Park for Linley to

Frog Mill, and along the chain of coverts opposite Apley, on to Stanley, when he turned to the right and made his point good to Mr. Stephen's coverts, and from thence to Caughley, which large covert he passed quickly through, making in the direction of the Wooden Bridge; but soon after leaving Caughley, the hounds got away from the whole field of horsemen, and night coming on they lost them entirely. When last seen they were running breast high, but what they did with their fox, no one could tell. The time from the find to when they ran out of sight of the horsemen, was one hour and twenty minutes. Such an event is seldom heard of, and in modern days is only paralleled by a run with Lord Drumlanrig's hounds. Some of Mr. Baker's hounds did not come home for two or three days; and although the performance is highly creditable to the pack in respect to their condition and stoutness, it is scarcely possible to conceive anything more vexatious and annoying to a master of hounds than to be compelled to return home without his pack, and in answer to interrogatories what has become of them, to be compelled to acknowledge they have fairly beaten him. The nature of this severe country, and the heavy state it was in, afford however an ample apology.

That which is called the Ludlow country was, I believe, many years ago, hunted by the late

Mr. Childe of Kinlet, and after him by the late Mr. Dansey of Easton; also by Mr. Adams of Ludlow, and when he gave up, the country was vacant for a short time. Mr. Stubbs, of the Wetmore, had them, on and off, nearly twenty years, although during part of the time Mr. Dansey, a son of the gentleman already named, relieved Mr. Stubbs a season or two. Lord Gifford also had them in 1841. When no one else could be found to keep on the hounds, Mr. Stubbs invariably responded to the voice of the sporting inhabitants, and for so enthusiastically promoting the welfare of fox-hunting, they cannot but feel deeply indebted to him. This gentleman and his son must be included among the most ardent of Salopian sportsmen. The gift is in them hereditary; as the late Mr. Stubbs, the father of the elder one of whom I am now writing, was a very celebrated man in his day, and is thus introduced in the Epwell Hunt.

"With his hat in his hand, looking out for a gate,
Neither looking nor riding by any means straight,
Mr. Stubbs, a great sportsman, no doubt, in his time,
But who hunting on Sundays once deem'd it no crime;
Making desperate play through some fine muddy lanes,
With kicking and skirting, got in for his pains,
High waving the brush, and with pleasure half mad,
Roaring out 'Yoicks! have at 'em; we've kill'd him, my lad.'"

It is necessary in order to explain the allusion made about hunting on Sundays, to introduce an

anecdote recorded of this gentleman. During many years he resided at Beckbury, in this county, where he kept a pack of hounds, and to guard against a blank day, usually had some foxes confined in a building appropriated to their use. Going to feed them on a Sunday morning, one of them made his escape, but not unperceived by this keen sportsman, who immediately let the pack out of the kennel and laid them on the scent. After a run exceeding twenty miles, the fox was killed in a village just as the good people were returning from church.

The Ludlow hounds came out this season under the direction of a new master, Mr. Sitwell, who has, I am informed, made every preparation necessary to promote sport.

The best portion of Shropshire, as a hunting country, is that which is hunted by Sir Watkin Wynn, but it varies exceedingly. There is some very fair land about Ercal Heath and Sundorne, and the Wheatland country, although very rough, holds a capital scent and good stout, wild foxes. The fences in many parts are very strong, and are often augmented with wide blind ditches, and in places there are some nasty brooks. If a horse is sufficiently accomplished to get safely over the fences, and has pace, he may be trusted in any country. On the Titterstone Clee Hill the foxes have a strong hold, I believe unequalled in any other part

of England. In many places there are huge masses of granite lying about in a most chaotic fashion, under which the foxes have their runs, and from which it is useless to attempt to bolt them. As it is utterly impossible to stop these earths, on the night before hunting, at the time the foxes are supposed to be abroad in search of food, a range of fires is lit along the hills to cut off their retreat at daybreak, and the men — generally colliers from the neighbouring mines, who are employed to make the fires — remain on duty till the hunting is over, that they may guard the entrances to what may be appropriately termed the fortifications of the foxes. The result of this is, that they are found in all directions; some in the coverts, others in the dingles or hollow pits, and being of a very wild nature with anything of a scent, they are sure to occasion a clipping run. It is, however, an expensive process, as it requires from thirty to forty men to manage the fires, and they consume a considerable portion of ale and cider, exclusive of their pay. The appearance of the bonfires on the hills is a sure indication of what is about to take place on the morrow, and as the love of sport prevails as much among the lower order of Shropshire natives, as any other class, some hundreds of the colliers will be seen in waiting on the hills to participate in the diversion. Clad in the roughest style of dress, if demi-nudity

can be acknowledged or associated with the expression; they present a strange appearance, and are as black as demons, from the nature of their work. To hear their unearthly, Kaffir-like shouts and yells, mingled with the melodious cry of the hounds when a fox is viewed making an attempt to gain his accustomed haven, still guarded by the lingering embers of the fires, and behold these human imps, literally of "the world below," afford a scene as exciting as it is extraordinary. The riding on the Titterstone Hill is a service of great danger; the huge and rugged stones which lie about in all directions, some several feet above, others nearly level with the surface, present very uncertain footing for the horse; but many of the sportsmen, especially the farmers, ride over these obstacles at an alarming pace.

I must not omit to mention, that during the time the Wheatland hounds were kept on by the farmers — that is about the year 1828 — Mr. Jones of Maesmawr, near Newtown, in Montgomeryshire, occasionally brought his unique pack for a fortnight at a time into this district. They were designated the Welsh hounds, and most truly did they preserve the ancient system in every respect. Many of them were the old-fashioned rough-coated hounds; a breed which I imagine to be now extinct, except for the purpose of otter-hunting. It is, however, but fair to state they seldom missed

their fox. Commencing their operations at a very early hour, they hunted their game up to his kennel by the drag, and a run of three or four hours' duration was very frequently the result. When this establishment was broken up, the sale of the horses occasioned considerable interest in the sporting world, not only in consequence of the cleverness of many of them, but also from the curious description given of them in the catalogues, wherein the runs in which they had distinguished themselves were faithfully portrayed.

The late Mr. Pinches of Ticklerton, at one time likewise hunted a portion of the country now claimed by the Wheatland Hunt; and that was another pack which rejoiced in ancient tactics. It was called the United Pack, but whether that was intended jocosely, I will not presume to state. The Independent Pack would have been a more appropriate term; for they were all over the country, each hound appearing to be devoting his attention to his own specific object. This their worthy master considered a great perfection, arguing, that if they were kept together, fifteen couples would be of no more use in the field than four or five; but by spreading extensively, each hound had an opportunity of distinguishing himself by rendering assistance, either in finding a fox, or recovering a scent. Hounds which other masters would have drafted

for being rank skirters, Mr. Pinches considered invaluable. The first time I ever saw them, was at Willey Park, and they had commenced drawing the covert when I arrived. I soon found the master, who hunted them himself. At his horse's heels was a powerful, good-looking hound, but awfully disfigured by having one ear cropped close to his head, and his stern docked to within three inches of the stump. On my expressing astonishment, and inquiring from Mr. Pinches why the poor animal had been so mutilated, he replied, "That is the best hound in England; he was given to me by Mr. Jones of Maesmawr; he was docked, and had his ear cut off, that he might not be stolen." "An effectual remedy," I observed, "and, doubtless, an original idea; but how is it," I inquired, "that he is not with the other hounds in covert, trying to find his fox?" "Oh," said his master, "I always keep him with me, so that if I have a chance of seeing a fox break covert, I can lay him on in view; he would not leave my horse's heels even if the other hounds were running hard, until I told him; he has been trained to it." This might have been, as Mr. Pinches supposed, the best hound in England; but it was certainly a very extraordinary way of obtaining his services. Like Mr. Jones's hounds, they had long runs and killed their foxes after the fashion of olden times, and their performances gratified those who were in the

habit of hunting with them. So that they were pleased, it would be uncourteous to compare them with modern packs. Their kind-hearted, good-tempered master died a few years since, in the prime of life, and the hounds having passed into the hands of Mr. Luther, still continue to hunt a rough country near Bishop's Castle, and in Clun Forest.

We will now turn to the Albrighton country, which comprises a portion af Shropshire, a part of Staffordshire, and a few coverts in Worcestershire. This country was very irregularly hunted till the year 1825. As I have previously stated, the late Mr. George Forester of Willey, hunted a part of it. The late Earl of Stamford and Warrington also hunted it with a very magnificent establishment; at least such is the tradition of some of the "oldest inhabitants;" but I believe, his lordship took his hounds occasionally to his estate at Grooby, in Leicestershire, so that a part of the season the Shropshire and Staffordshire sportsmen were without hounds, an inconvenience very prevalent in those times. When the earl gave up, Sir Richard Pulestone occasionally hunted the Shropshire side, which was then called the Shiffnal country, and Colonel Newnham drew the coverts on the Worcestershire borders when it suited his convenience.

When Colonel Newnham gave up his hounds

in Worcestershire, Mr. Hornyhold succeeded, and hunted this country occasionally, his hounds lying at the Stew Poney Kennels. Kit Atkinson was the huntsman, John King, first whip, and Joseph Maiden, second. With these hounds I saw one of the most severe days of which I have any recollection. It was on the 9th of January, 1822. They found in Pudsey's Gorse at five minutes after twelve, and lost their fox near Orton Hills, at fifty minutes after three; they had very few checks, and none of those of any duration.

Thus was the country hunted till 1823, when Sir Bellingham Graham entered into an engagement to hunt it, and resided at Compton House, near Kinfare, where kennels were provided; he also used those at Ivetsey Bank, as a temporary accommodation when the appointments were on the Shiffnal side. The magnificence of Sir Bellingham's establishment, the very superior sport which he afforded, and his hunting accomplishments, were acknowledged by all, and it was a source of great regret when, the following season, the baronet undertook to hunt the Shropshire country in conjunction with this; inasmuch as every alternate month or six weeks, each district was without hounds.

The year after—that is in 1825—Mr. Boycott of Rudge, entered upon the county, from which

period it may be said to have been regularly hunted, and the limits defined. This gentleman was unquestionably a sportsman, and at one time a first-rate performer over a country; but he had arrived at a time of life when the keenness for riding usually diminishes, and as he hunted his own hounds, the failing was obvious. The pack with which he commenced operations was purchased from Mr. Nunn, and had been hunting in Essex; they were not level in size, nor was their condition by any means good; but Mr. Boycott certainly improved them vastly. His first whipper-in was old Zac. Goddard, a very celebrated man in Warwickshire, when in the service of Lord Middleton. Skinner whipped-in under him, and subsequently took his place. Mr. Boycott was frequently much annoyed, and often not without cause, at the way in which his hounds were over-ridden; and I certainly must declare, I have at times seen those proceedings carried to a greater excess in this than in any other country I ever hunted in. The fields were generally very numerous, sometimes from one hundred and fifty to two hundred horsemen out; the nature of the country is particularly calculated to facilitate the manœuvres of aspiring characters, much of the land being very light, and the fences moderate, with an infinity of roads. It was not an unusual event, as soon as a fox was found—ay, before he

had broken covert—to see horsemen spread in all directions, speculating as to the line the fox would take. Under any circumstances, such conduct is exceedingly provoking, and in a bad-scenting country, certain to destroy all prospects of a run. Withal, Mr. Boycott was a kind-hearted, good-natured man, and conciliatory with the farmers. A circumstance, illustrative of this, is worthy of being introduced. Close to a covert called Lightwood, was a field of wheat, over which, on a previous occasion, the whipper-in had ridden for the purpose of viewing the fox away. The farmer, unnecessarily annoyed at this, came to the place of meeting, and made a complaint. "Ah," said Mr. Boycott, "I have heard all about it, I turned him away;" and the farmer looking at the two whipper-ins, who were with the hounds, and not being able to recognise the offender, was perfectly satisfied. It happened that the whipper-in who had ridden over the wheat, had met with an accident, and his place was supplied for the day by the kennel-man, which enabled Mr. Boycott to satisfy the complaining farmer.

After serving a short apprenticeship, Mr. Boycott sold his pack to Captain Freeman, and resigned. In 1831, the management of the hounds was undertaken by Mr. Walter Gifford of Chillington, when kennels were built at Albrighton, from which circumstance the name of the hunt originated.

John Beardshaw, who had been hunting Mr. Shaw's hounds, and was previously in the service of Mr. Foljambe, was engaged as huntsman, and John Pugh as whipper-in.

The hounds at Albrighton were unfortunately very unhealthy, and that serious malady kennel lameness, made its appearance most extensively. The disorder was attributed, and no doubt justly, to the situation, which was on a sandstone rock. In the hope of effecting a remedy, the floors were taken up to introduce a layer of cinders, but as may be conjectured without producing any good results. The hounds were then removed to another place; there the same cause existed, and no benefit was derived from the change.

Mr. Walter Gifford had kept harriers some years previously, and as a sportsman was gifted with first-rate qualifications. His style of riding over a country was quiet and very workman-like. He had a little bay horse remarkably clever at all kinds of intricate fences, particularly at standing leaps; and the way in which he crept over the country, appearing to be going no pace, and yet always in a good place, was quite remarkable. After keeping the hounds five seasons, during which time he showed a vast deal of sport for the country, in 1837, his brother-in-law, Sir Thomas Boughey, took the management without any subscription. On removing the hounds to

fresh kennels at Aqualate, the lameness, with a few exceptions of inveterate, old-established cases, disappeared — a convincing proof of the cause. Sir Thomas performed the duties of huntsman himself, having a very clever man, William Wells, to preside in the kennel. However zealous he was in the cause, the baronet was not successful in the field. The hounds were in good condition, the horses unexceptionable, and Sir Thomas rode well over the country; but public opinion did not resound in his praise as a huntsman; he did not appear to be acquainted with the run of the foxes, and when his hounds came to a check with a bad scent, did not avail himself of the most likely points to hit upon the line. The baronet only kept them three seasons, when Mr. Thomas Holyoake was called upon to undertake the responsible duties of master, with a committee, who exonerated him from all liabilities in the expenditure. The Summer-house, halfway between Wolverhampton and Shiffnal, was selected as the site of the kennels, and a more unfortunate one could not have been chosen. It was upon a very light, sandy soil, with sandstone rock for a substratum, and being superficially dry, it was conjectured that all the evils of kennel lameness would be avoided—an opinion which at the time I ventured to dissent from. The lodging-rooms were constructed in a brick-built barn, which had been

erected some years, and therefore dry, which it was expected would insure the sound condition of the inmates; as many persons ascribed the malady to the dampness of the kennel walls — a conclusion which is far from being correct. There is no doubt that kennel lameness is originally produced from the damp exhalations arising from the earth, and from that cause rheumatism is promoted by the hounds lying together in a large body: therefore the more porous the soil, the greater the amount of exhalation. There is no question, that the disorder is also, to a certain extent, hereditary, inasmuch that the produce of hounds so afflicted have a predisposition, which will be brought out in a kennel having a slight tendency to occasion the disease. It must also be observed, that there are different degrees of unhealthy properties in kennels, depending upon the nature of the soil on which they are built. Various plans have been resorted to for the purpose of rendering unsound kennels healthy; large stones, chalk, clay, impervious cement, and all such devices that human ingenuity can suggest, have been introduced under the lodging-rooms and yards in several kennels which I am acquainted with, but without any satisfactory result. I have only heard of two instances where any permanent benefit has arisen from any plans that have been tried in kennels decidedly unsound,

and those are with two packs of harriers, the respective property of Mr. Jasper of Stableford, in Shropshire, a gentleman well known as a very superior sportsman in the Albrighton Hunt; and Mr. Wilson Roberts, for many years Member for Bewdley, in Worcestershire. Mr. Jasper's hounds were so very lame from the kennel, which is on a sandy soil, that he most reluctantly determined upon giving them up. Having tried various experiments, including those already mentioned, he came to the conclusion, that the affliction was produced from the damp exhalations and atmosphere surrounding the kennel acting upon the hounds after severe work, when lying close to each other in the usual way on the benches. Being very unwilling to give up his hounds, he determined to try one experiment, which fortunately proved successful. The plan is simple, not expensive, and may readily be adopted in any kennel. It is to form a separate box or compartment for each hound on the ordinary beds. A board is fixed down the middle, which may vary in height from two to two feet six inches, according to the standard of the pack. The front and back are also provided with a similar contrivance, running parallel with the boards in the centre, but these are not required to be so high. The separate compartments are then formed by short cross boards extending from the centre to

the back and front; and being made to slide into grooves, they are readily removed for the purpose of replenishing or shaking up the straw, which passing under these boards is kept neat and straight. Mr. Jasper, who gave me the details of his plan some years since, informed me of the complete success which he had experienced, adding many good reasons for adopting it. Besides that of rendering the pack free from kennel lameness, it prevents hounds fighting, or defiling their beds, and every hound having once taken to his lodging retains it. Mr. Roberts followed the example, with equally satisfactory results.

Bad as was the condition of the pack with which Mr. Boycott commenced, part of that which Mr. Holyoake began with was still worse. Sir Thomas Boughey's hounds were sold at Birmingham, and the late Duke of Cleveland's being disposed of at the same time, several lots were purchased to form the new pack, nine couples of which were put forward. I certainly never saw hounds in such a woful condition. However, they had the whole of the summer to dress them, and bring them round, which was to all appearance done satisfactorily. At the same time, I believe it to be utterly impossible, when hounds have been reduced by neglect to such a miserable state as they were, to re-establish their condition under twelve months; and some never recover it

at all. The remainder of the pack (thirty-one couples in all) was composed of drafts from the Ludlow, Mr. Smyth Owen's, Mr. Candler's, and other neighbouring hunts.

In 1848, the Earl of Stamford and Warrington relieved the members of the Albrighton Hunt from all the expenses attendant on the undertaking. His lordship took the entire management, and drew William Staples forth from the inactive duties of an innkeeper, to which calling he had devoted himself during the last two or three seasons. He had become very stout, but his lordship supplied him with horses equal to his weight. After the first season, greatly to the regret and disappointment of the resident sportsmen, Lord Stamford signified his wish to withdraw, but most liberally engaged to contribute a large sum to the maintenance of the hounds, and kindly offered several valuable horses to the committee, which was again formed to conduct the arrangements, and the Honourable Arthur Wrottesley undertook the duties of mastership, retaining the services of William Staples.

Mr. Thomas Shaw Hellier, who succeeded Mr. Vyner in North Warwickshire, which he hunted four or five seasons, and subsequently the South Wold country, came forward in 1852, and relieved Mr. Arthur Wrottesley from his duties. A better selection certainly could not have been made;

for, independent of his general knowledge of everything appertaining to the "noble science," as he was born in the country and passed his noviciate in it, he is perfectly acquainted with every detail necessary to afford sport. Edward Bullen, who was with Mr. Hellier in the South Wold country, remains as huntsman.

Although I have not seen Mr. Hellier's hounds since he left North Warwickshire, I have reason to know he has a very superior pack. He commenced upon an excellent principle, that of procuring them in the first instance from one or two of the most celebrated establishments, and subsequently breeding a sufficient number, or nearly so, every year to form his entry. This is important for obvious reasons; by doing so a master of hounds knows the peculiar excellences or failings of the progenitors, which he cannot ascertain so minutely, if he procures drafts from other kennels. On this subject, Somervile gives some excellent counsel; which may be found at page 182.

Beckford also observes that a pack "to look well should be all nearly of a size; and I even think they should all look of the same family." This latter perfection cannot be obtained so readily if a master of hounds breeds from various sorts totally dissimilar in their characters.

Mr. Hellier procured most of his hounds in the first instance from the Earl Yarborough's;

some from the Quorn, which contained much of the Brocklesby blood, and were very similar in appearance; a few from Mr. Smyth Owen's and the Warwickshire. The following season he had a large draft of unentered hounds from the Duke of Rutland's kennels, fifteen couples and a half of which were put forward. Upon these he has engrafted his present pack, and it was impossible for him to choose better blood. As he has been a master of hounds fifteen seasons, having made good use of his time, there is no doubt he has a most superior pack.

There are many serious impediments to sport of a first-rate character in the Albrighton country which cannot very readily be overcome. It holds a very indifferent scent; the land generally being of a light, sandy nature, except in wet weather, it frequently happens there is no scent at all. The coverts, though not large, are numerous and very strong; consequently, hounds have great difficulty in forcing the foxes through them. The estates are in the hands of a great number of proprietors, and with the exception of the Duke of Sutherland's, the Earls Stamford and Warrington's, and Bradford's, Lords Ward's and Wrottesley's, Mr. Gifford's and Mr. Moseley's, are small. They are most zealous preservers of foxes, and, without asserting that any of the landed proprietors are at all hostile to fox-hunting,

they are very fond of their game. There is a great abundance of rabbits, for which steel-traps are constantly set, and many a fox is sacrificed by that means; and I know that, at one period, the annual destruction was so extensive as to render it imperative to procure many brace of cubs to turn down. That they should afford much sport could not be expected, and the only remedy that can be suggested, is to prevail on the owners of the coverts where the rabbits are abundant, to have wires set instead of steel-traps.

I do not intend to stigmatise any of the landed proprietors in the Albrighton Hunt with the unsportsman-like, unneighbourly practice of wilfully killing the foxes. I am quite certain, as a body, they are as zealous in the good cause as in any other country; and some years ago, there was one worthy individual who certainly exceeded all others I ever met with, in his affection for the vulpine race. This person was an honest miller, one George Burgess, who lived on a farm belonging to the Enville estate, upon which, close to the house, there was a gorse covert, in which a litter of cubs was invariably bred, and they were as regularly fed by the miller, as any of his family. He was not only a very good friend to the foxes, but a very hospitable man withal; pork-pies, bread and cheese, and ale, were always provided for those who liked to partake thereof.

One day, when Sir Bellingham Graham was drawing the gorse, I called for some lunch, when the hounds found a fox, and hastening to depart, Mrs. Burgess exclaimed, "Oh, they have found, *but I hope they won't kill him.*" The last words were expressed with that energy which proclaimed that they came from the heart. He ran a short way and returned, by which time the earth was unstopped, a proceeding not quite fair towards the hounds; but who could be angry with such affectionate friends to the foxes as George Burgess and his wife? He had a grey horse which he rode for many years, and was a very constant attendant when the hounds met within reach. Poor fellow, he has been dead some years; but I hope there are many of the good sort left.

The Albrighton Hunt claims a considerable extent of country, and is more than thirty-five miles from north to south. The coverts of Seighford were a few years since drawn by these hounds; but since the establishment of the North Staffordshire, they have either been given up to them or held neutral. The Ran Dans on the southern extent are neutral with the Worcestershire. Hilton Hall, Lanely or Lowney Green, and Teddesley, are on the east, beyond which there is a considerable extent of country, including Cannock Chase, which has not been hunted for many years. Travelling from thence towards the south, the mining dis-

tricts preclude the possibility of hunting. The North Staffordshire Hunt is at the northern extremity, and the Worcestershire on the south. The River Severn divides the western boundary. Although there are several coverts beyond, which were drawn by Mr. Boycott, Mr. Walter Gifford, and Mr. Thomas Holyoake, previously to Mr. Baker having the Wheatland hounds, that is a country which the fastidious first-flight men of the Albrighton Hunt always hold in sovereign contempt—or dread.

CHAP. XI.

Attractions in Hampshire. — Appearance of the Country. — General Character of the Country. — The New Forest. — First Establishment of Fox-hounds. — The late Mr. Gilbert. — The late Mr. John Warde. — Madness among the Hounds — Mr. Nicol. — Mr. Wyndham. — Mr. Codrington. — Captain Sheddon. — Mr. Theobald. — Mr. T. A. Smith. — A Letter from an old Hampshire Sportsman. — First Fox-hounds brought into Hampshire by the late Lord Stowell. — Mr. Barber. — The Alderman of Andover. — Jack Haines. — Mr. Poyntz. — John Topper. — Ancient Customs. — The late Honourable W. Bowes. — Remarks on the Letter. — Mr. T. A. Smith's Hounds. — Their Blood. — Hunting Arrangements. — George Carter. — The Woodlands. — Treatment of the Hounds. — Boundaries of the Country. — High Character of Mr. T. A. Smith's Establishment. — Preservation of Foxes. — The late Mr. Chute. — The Vine Country. — Mr. Beaver. — Mr. Pole. — Mr. Henry Fellowes. — Mr. D. Taylor. — Sir Richard Ryecroft. — W. Cox. — Mr. St. John. — Change of Management, and the Consequences. — Captain Mainwaring. — The late Duke of Wellington a true Friend to Fox-hunting. — Annual Meeting at Strathfieldsaye. — Nature of the Vine Country. — Accidents. — A Run with the Vine. — A Run with the Craven. — The late Mr. J. Villebois and the H. H. — George IV. — Mr. Villebois' Hounds. — Major Barrett. — Dick Forster. — Captain Haworth. — The Ropley Kennels. — The Hursley Country. — Lord Gifford. — A Run and an Event. — Lord Gifford removes to Herefordshire. — Attacked by Hornets. — The Season of 1852 and 1853 in Herefordshire. — Mr. Wall. — Mr. Knight. — Mr. Pearce. — The H. H. Pack. — The Hambledon.

It is a singular fact that Hampshire, although far from being a first-rate country, should have

so many packs of hounds as there are kept in it; but it proves the good taste of the inhabitants, and their inherent love of sport. The great celebrity of three masters of hounds, the late Mr. Chute, the late Mr. Villebois, and Mr. Thomas Assheton Smith, has no doubt been to a great degree the cause of the distinction which it has acquired, and serves to show how much may be effected by masters of hounds, who possess the talent, the means, and the inclination.

A sportsman, who is a stranger, travelling through this country forms a highly favourable opinion of it as a fox-hunting district. It appears very open, the fields large, many of them upwards of one hundred acres, the coverts do not inculcate the idea of being extensive or over numerous, and therefore he judges that a good wild fox and a superior pack of hounds must insure sport. With that view I took up my abode in the county three seasons, being further induced to do so in consequence of Lord Gifford at that ime hunting what is called the H. H. country, previously having had experience of his lordship's talent as a sportsman in the Vale of White Horse. I cannot say that my expectations of the country were altogether realised. It certainly is open, but the foxes do not very often face that part of it. The fences many of them are composed of hazel twenty or thirty feet wide, and are cultivated for fuel; in fact, what would

in many countries be called belts or plantations. These you cannot in all places penetrate, although there is nothing to jump, and the consequence is, you have to ride to the openings, or as they are provincially termed shards, which are sometimes protected with hurdles. There is a considerable portion of ploughed land, which in wet weather is distressingly deep; and in parts the flints abound most excessively. The first impression with respect to the coverts is erroneous; they are many of them very large, and the foxes usually run from one to another; thus the hardest-riding men may be thrown out, for it is impossible to follow hounds through them. The only alternative therefore is, to keep on the outside of the smaller coverts, and follow the rides through the larger ones, when, if the fox turns short from you, in all probability, you are thrown out. Many of the woods are light in the bottom, and consequently hounds can run nearly as fast through them as they can in the open. Of brooks, there are very few, and there is not much meadow land; but to make amends for that, there are some fine open downs, over which, when the scent is favourable, hounds can run at a most extraordinary pace.

Although the New Forest takes precedence in history as the hunting domain of British kings, when William the Conqueror is said to have extended its previous boundaries and converted it

into a royal chase, and when Rufus his son exercised despotic sway to render his hunting grounds exclusive and complete for the enjoyment of the diversion in which he lost his life, it is comparatively of recent date that fox-hunting was introduced, and not till after that sport had been common in many other parts of England. The first pack of fox-hounds of which there is any record in the New Forest, were established at the close of the last century by Mr. Compton, who was succeeded by Mr. Gilbert. In 1808 Mr. John Warde, who had been, up to that period, hunting Northamptonshire, where he sold his hounds, with the exception of three couples of bitches and their whelps, to Lord Althorp, engaged to hunt the New Forest, and purchased thirty couples of hounds from the late Colonel Cooke, to enable him to fulfil his agreement. This talented sportsman of olden days experienced a sad loss and disappointment: madness broke out in his pack, whereby he lost forty couples of hounds, and in 1814 gave up the New Forest to Mr. Nicol, who had the repute of being at that time a very first-rate sportsman, and of having had a very superior pack of hounds, consisting of the best blood from the Duke of Beaufort's, and his predecessor's kennels, which in the year 1828 he sold to Lord Kintore for a thousand guineas. They went into Aberdeenshire, after which Mr.

Wyndham took the country vacated by Mr. Nicol, and hunted it till 1838. Mr. Codrington then had it four years, when Captain Sheddon relieved him from the duties, and continued till the spring of the present year, although he sold most of his hounds in 1851 to Mr. Thomas Drake; subsequently to which it has, I believe, been hunted only two days in the week. Mr. Theobald, who had been hunting a country in the neighbourhood of Bath two seasons, has now engaged to hunt this.

Kennel lameness is a malady said to afflict hounds in the New Forest most extensively; and such, I am informed, is the nature of the soil that, build kennels where you may, the disorder makes its appearance. There are, however, other parts of Hampshire where much difficulty exists in keeping hounds free from this painful disorder.

As a master of hounds, an amateur huntsman, and a horseman, Mr. Thomas Assheton Smith's name ranks so high that it would be superfluous in me to attempt to raise his fame. I have no data by which I can state the exact period when Mr. Smith first commenced hunting in the neighbourhood of his seat, Tidworth House; but I apprehend it must be about thirty years since, prior to which the country had been irregularly hunted; in fact, Mr. Smith formed it. On making inquiry from the oldest sportsman in the country,

a gentleman who was a frequent guest of George the Fourth when Prince of Wales, then residing at Kempshot House, between Basingstoke and Winchester, my kind friend, wrote me a long letter, which I cannot do better than transcribe. As he is still an enthusiastic admirer of fox-hunting, there is little doubt the taste was engrafted in those very early days which he alludes to, when, as a schoolboy at Andover, Lord Stawell's hounds attracted his notice; such is the irresistible force of early impressions. My communicative correspondent has not only supplied the names of the respective masters of the hounds in his youthful days, but has given a brief account of their proceedings illustrative of the life and customs of fox-hunters in olden times.

"Dear Sir,

"I think in the year 1783, I was at school at Andover, and recollect that, during the two years I was there, Lord Stawell brought a clever pack of fox-hounds to the Star Inn, kept by Mercer. During that time I saw them frequently pass the school on their way to Doles Wood and other places. Tom Harrison was the name of the huntsman, who lived afterwards with Mr. Russell at Greywell, near Odiham; whether George Sharp and John Richmond were at that time his assistants, I cannot say. Lord Stawell, I believe, lived at Marsland, near Farnham, and hunted about that country. I presume there were

not many foxes at that time ; in consequence his pack was shifted about a good deal. For instance, he had a kennel at the public house a mile out of Basingstoke, on the Preston Candover road ; his own quarters very frequently at Hackwood, in the late Duke of Bolton's time, where I several times met him, the duchess having taken some notice of me as a little boy. On one occasion, early in September, we found a vixen and six cubs in Springwood. The vixen got away ; and in about two hours we killed the whole of the litter. About two years after, Mr. Barber, of Fremington near Barnstaple, brought up one of the best packs of the day, and hunted a great part of Mr. Smith's country.—The first year he came to the Star Inn—having with him some very choice companions from Devonshire, all of whom were neighbours to my mother's family and other relations; among them Colonel Bassett, who succeeded Sir Thomas Acland as master of the stag-hounds in Devon.

"Things were done differently to what they are in these days. I expect there were more pipes of port wine finished by this party and their neighbouring jolly companions during their winter visits — perhaps four – than have been since in twenty years. They had great assistance in their festivities as well as field pursuits from such as we seldom see now—Messrs. Harry and Walter Blunt, of Amport, Colonel Beaver, with several others. General Sir Sidney Meadows, I believe, continually joined them in the evening. Mr. Pile, an alderman of Andover, who, together with his horse, numbered a hundred years, was a general at-

tendant in the field. Jack Haines, the star of Devon huntsmen, was idolised by all the Hampshire sportsmen; and I had the pleasure of seeing him cut off several brushes, having frequently gone with my brother Etonians, Newton and Coulson Wallop, from Hurtsbourne. Mr. Poyntz, I believe, for many years hunted a part of Mr. Smith's country from Midgham, and for several years was in the habit of bringing a strong pack to the Red Lion at Overton. He lived, during his visits there, at the large inn; but always slept at the Red Lion, his bedroom looking into the kennel. His hounds derived some advantage from what those of the present day seldom do; for they had plenty of room to make their casts. Eight pounds was the maximum price for the hunters, and no corn allowed between Lady Day and Michaelmas. The hounds were never over-ridden. John Topper, huntsman, had sometimes difficulty in keeping his hounds together. During the last few years of Mr. Poyntz's hunting, he invariably came to covert in his carriage and four, with two postilions; his valet, John Child, assisting Topper in the field. Also Topper had sometimes a boy to assist in bringing the three horses. Freefolk was a very favourite covert with my old friend; for being large, he usually went there on Monday and the following Wednesday; also because he had frequently a tired fox to hunt, and besides he picked up the hounds which were left behind. He continued his hounds very late in life, and latterly seldom left his carriage. To insure amusement, he had a loaded gun ready for a shot at a hare,

or partridge, or whatever came in his way. He was always a very agreeable companion; and I remember with gratitude his kindness to me when a boy. The Honourable W. Bowes, assisted by his brother-in-law Barry Price, had a clever small pack two or three seasons, lying at the inn at Everleigh; and I frequently joined them from the late Mr. Beache's at Netheravon, and recollect a capital run from Southgrove, their best covert. An active man, Wilkinson, well known in Leicestershire, was their huntsman. Mr. Powlett Powlett, of Sombourne, used for many years to hunt the Stockbridge side. He also patronised Overton some months in the year, and from thence the Crux Easton district. His twenty-four good runs from Freefolk Wood are not yet forgotten. It happened that, between the time of Mr. Poyntz and the latter gentleman, there was a general carnage of the vermin, and only a few old cunning foxes remained. Mr. Smith, the father of the present gentleman, always kept a strong pack of harriers at Tidworth; and I believe latterly they were all small, high-bred fox-hounds, and generally hunted foxes. I am sorry I cannot supply you with dates; but if there is any other information you wish for that is in my power to give you, I shall be happy to do so.

"Yours truly,

"T. T."

This letter furnishes an admirable sketch of the mode in which fox-hunting was conducted in former days. Lord Stawell's hounds, like the Old

Berkeley, were removed from one part of the country to another, as foxes happened to be heard of, and their destruction was as much the motive for hunting as sport — instance, the case of killing six cubs in September. Our forefathers were no doubt jovial souls; but of what materials their heads were composed to endure such potations of port, it is difficult to imagine. And what an old veteran the alderman of Andover must have been! There is an originality in the management of Mr. Poyntz' hounds, and if we take it as a specimen of fox-hunting in early times, the high fame which Mr. Meynell attained in Leicestershire is accounted for. Hounds constantly moving from one place to another, with very inadequate kennel accommodation, never could be in condition; and woful must have been the plight of those unfortunate creatures which were on "the loose" in Freefolk Wood from Monday to Wednesday. The gun to shoot "at a hare or partridge, or whatever came in his way," savours very much of the French custom; but I hope for the honour of the ancient order of fox-hunters, that he never assisted his hounds unlawfully. It is true, Mr. Poyntz did not take any unfair advantage of the vulpine family, in the condition of his horses, which was, no doubt, on an equality with that of his hounds.

I am unable to state from what source Mr.

Smith's pack was at first formed; but his very extensive estates in Wales afford facilities for breeding a vast number of hounds annually. Many years since this gentleman gave Sir Richard Sutton one thousand guineas for a pack of hounds; and when the Duke of Grafton gave up hunting in 1842, his Grace's hounds were introduced into the Tidworth kennel, at a similar price. Carter, who had been hunting them, was engaged to succeed Richard Burton. The bone and power they possess are quite extraordinary, and that without any approach to coarseness; constituting the very perfection of symmetry, so difficult to acquire. The usual complement is generally about one hundred couples of hounds in kennel, a very ample number although they do hunt six days in the week; but Mr. Smith likes a full pack in the field, and five or six and twenty couples are usually taken out; a number equal to what is kept for two days a week in many of the provincial countries. The blood is in great request, especially among the neighbouring hunts. Bangor, Newsman, Bobadil, Nabob, and Nigel, are stallion hounds of great celebrity, particularly so the latter; and I have seen many of his progeny, which are excellent. They are generally of a grey-pie, or light hair-pie colour, and may be distinguished by their symmetrical proportions. They had a hound in

the Vine kennels a few years since by him, and named after him, out of Mr. Smith's Boscobel, quite the champion of the pack.

Mr. Smith hunts his own hounds four days in the week, for which he of course drafts the pick of his kennel, and selects the best portion of his country. George Carter works the young hounds in the woodlands on Wednesdays and Saturdays; and sometimes they have a bye-day, when of course there are two packs out. The woods in which Carter's pack usually operates, are Wherwell (provincially pronounced Orrel) Wood, Doles Wood, and Faccombe Wood, and they are admirably adapted for the purpose of entering hounds and making them steady. The old-fashioned custom of flogging hounds for chasing hare is completely dispensed with. If, at any time, a hare jumps up before them, and a few should join in chase, a whipper-in rides to head them, and the instant they check turns them to the horn, with a rate but scarcely a crack of the whip; as to a thong being laid on a hound in such cases, it is not permitted. Plenty of work, and encouragement to hunt their fox, are the only means resorted to for the prevention of riot. Hares are not generally over numerous in the county of Southampton. Mr Assheton Smith's country is very open, especially that portion of it which is in Wiltshire, on the borders of Salisbury

Plain, over which a fox occasionally makes his point. This the western boundary is joined by the South Wiltshire Hunt, Mr. Wyndham's. Oare Hill, three miles and a half from Marlborough, is the extreme northern point of meeting, and Savernake Forest, near at hand, is in the Craven country, which traverses from thence in the direction of Kingsclere. Stratford Sub Castle, near Salisbury, Clarendon Park, and Spirewell, are the southern limits, which adjoin the New Forest country. The Hursley and Vine Hunts lie towards the east.

The warmest thanks of the gentlemen of the neighbourhood are due to Mr. Smith for the splendid establishment which he maintains entirely at his own expense, and the superior sport which these hounds afford in a country by no means first-rate is incontestible evidence of the judgment with which the hunting arrangements are conducted. Considering that Mr. Smith had been for many years accustomed to hunt in the Quorn and Belvoir Vale, where grass, ox-fences and gorse coverts prevail, it occasions some surprise that this celebrated sportsman could reconcile himself to so great a change. The possession of property around his mansion may have been the inducement, and a more worthy impulse cannot be suggested. Foxes are zealously preserved; indeed, it would be ungrateful of the landowners if they

were not mindful of such a return for Mr. Smith's liberality.

It will be gleaned from the letter of my friend that Mr. Powlett Powlett occasionally brought his hounds to Overton, to hunt the surrounding neighbourhood. About the commencement of the present century, the late Mr. Chute, of the Vine near Basingstoke, kept a pack of harriers, which he very soon converted into fox-hounds, and established the country known by the name of the estate. Having been a master of hounds some thirty years, this gentleman is said to have formed an exceedingly clever pack famed for stoutness and symmetrical proportions. The quaint motto over the kennel door, "Multum in parvo," was particularly characteristic of their merits. They are to this day spoken of by old sportsmen who were in the habit of hunting with them as having been remarkably well adapted to the country, and showing a vast deal of sport. Mr. Chute, at his decease in 1824, left a sum of money to be paid annually to the support of his favourites, provided they still retained the name of the Vine hounds. After that event they were kept during very short periods by Mr. Beaver, and Mr. Pole of West Ham, when Mr. Henry Fellowes undertook the management of them, and, I have every reason to believe, improved them considerably by procuring the best blood and drafts from the

Duke of Beaufort and Mr. Assheton Smith's kennels. In 1835 Mr. Donnithorne Taylor became the master of the Vine hounds; but he only kept them one season, when Mr. Fellowes resumed the important office. Adamson occupied the situation of huntsman for many years. Sir Richard Ryecroft, Bart., of Manydown Park, succeeded Mr. Fellowes, and engaged William Cox as the huntsman, he having previously hunted the Hampshire hounds for Captain Haworth, where he gained much reputation. Mr. St. John relieved Sir Richard Ryecroft in the year 1849, still retaining Cox to hunt the hounds. If evidence were wanting to show the disadvantages which arise from changes of masters of hounds and huntsmen, this would afford a most convincing example. During the period when Sir Richard Ryecroft had the management, the breeding and kennel details were left entirely to the huntsman. As soon as Mr. St. John took the command, he essayed to make many alterations, especially in the breeding and feeding departments. He was anxious to introduce a very different style of hounds, and procured a lot which had been drafted from Mr. Drake's *draft*. Assimilating the condition of hounds with the training of greyhounds, sheeps' trotters were substituted for horse-flesh; an experiment which did not continue the season through. Had Mr.

St. John kept the hounds longer, so as to have established the kind he appeared anxious to introduce, he might in time have formed a pack with some pretensions; but during the period when such changes are being effected, the pack must inevitably suffer. This gentleman relinquished his trust, at the conclusion of his third season, to Captain Mainwaring, son of Sir Harry Mainwaring, Bart., of Peover Hall, in Cheshire, who was for many years master of the Cheshire hounds.

The Vine country claims additional distinction from the patronage for many years afforded by the hero of a hundred fights, the late Duke of Wellington. Although the Strathfieldsaye estate is in the country formerly hunted by the late Sir John Cope, and now by Mr. Wheble, and his Grace has not many coverts in the Vine Hunt, with the exception of those at Woolverton Park and Ewhurst, he was for many years prior to his death a very liberal subscriber to the Vine hounds; something equivalent to a third of their annual expenditure being contributed by the gallant Duke. Fox-hunting derived not an insignificant prestige when the name of so great a hero became enlisted among many other zealous promoters. Justly appreciating the advantages which a taste for fox-hunting is certain to inspire, his Grace gave great encouragement to the officers under his command to join in the chase when employed

on foreign service. Duly estimating the consistency of the noble Duke's character, it is not probable that he should relax in what he regarded as a duty when peaceably enjoying the reward of his valour and of his countrymen's gratitude in the possession of an estate awarded as an appropriate tribute. During many seasons his Grace was a frequent attendant in the field both with the Vine and Sir John Cope's hounds; yet numerous public duties and increased age must of late years have operated materially to prevent his appearance at the covert side. None but the purest motive — that of patronising a national amusement essential to the welfare of his country — could have actuated his Grace to continue the large amount of 500*l.* per annum under such circumstances.

The anniversary of the judges making their accustomed circuit was for many years the occasion of the Bramshill hounds meeting at Strathfieldsaye. Those learned personages were invited to meet the masters of hounds in the neighbourhood on the previous day, to partake of the hospitalities of this his Grace's favourite country seat. The meeting of the hounds was a great attraction, to which sportsmen far and near resorted, all intent upon a good purpose. It may be inquired why the Duke of Wellington subscribed to the Vine hounds when Sir John Cope hunted the

greater portion of the country in which the Strathfieldsaye estates were situated, and met at the gallant Duke's seat. This may be readily answered. Sir John Cope did not receive or require any subscription, which after Mr. Chute's death the Vine did.

The foxes being well preserved, this country admits of being hunted four days in the week. It may be divided into two districts, the woodland, and the hills or rather the open, for there are but few hills in it. The woodlands are, in my humble opinion, the most unsuitable for fox-hunting of anything that can be conceived, albeit there are those who delight in them. They are so disposed that the coverts are not only numerous but extensive, and the hedgerows are so very wide, that to see hounds from the time they are put into covert, till the time they kill or lose their fox, is rarely practicable. The flints, in some parts, are very numerous, and often productive of accidents. During the three years I hunted in this county I had six horses, three of which met with bad accidents in consequence of the flints. One jumping into a road where there were many loose ones, slipped down and cut his knees. Another horse tore his shoe off and lacerated his foot severely, from the shoe becoming locked, as it were, with a large flint embedded in the earth. The third horse cut his

hind fetlock in a shocking manner in galloping over a flinty field. He divided an artery, and the hemorrhage was frightful; but getting him to a farm-house, binding it up tightly, and applying a ligature round the leg, he recovered.

The quickest run I saw with the Vine hounds during my residence in Hampshire, was on the 20th of January, 1849, on which day they met at Nuthanger. They drew Fro Park, where they soon found, and the fox broke in the direction of Kingsclere, but turned to the right over the vale, upwind to Sidmonton Down, which is rather a severe hill; at all events it proved so on this occasion, both to hounds and horses. Such a tailing of the latter with nothing but pace to contend against, I never saw on any other occasion. Having gained the summit, where there was a slight fog, the pace became first rate, and at the farther extremity of the down the hounds came to a check, literally from being blown. With more haste than judgment, they were immediately cast to the left in the direction of some earths, but they could not recover the scent, and after trying a long time quite in the opposite line to what the fox had taken, it was discovered that, at the point where the hounds checked, the fox had turned to the right down the hill, followed by three couples of hounds, which the fog and the breast of the hill hid from observation. They

followed on the line of the fox to the covert in which he was found, and were not at first missed. The time from the fox breaking covert to the check, was twenty-three minutes. Treadwell, the whipper-in, had a few months previously been discharged, and his place was not filled up by a sufficient substitute. Nine days afterwards the Craven hounds found the same fox, and gave a different account of him. Fro Park, it must be observed, is neutral with both hunts. These hounds found him in the same part of the covert; he broke at the same point, and was viewed by Clark, the first whip, who got the hounds away in a body in a very workmanlike manner. They soon settled down to the scent, and raced to the same point as the Vine had done, as far as the bottom of Sidmonton Down, but the pace was too great, and the fox was too closely pressed to admit of his bearing to the right, and facing the choaking hill as he had done before, and he kept on by a more easy ascent to Combe Hole, and thence to Canon's Heath, where they experienced a slight check. They soon recovered it by a masterly cast, crossed the Roman road to Ridgeway Heath, through a small spinny bearing a little to the left, and straight to Overton Court Farm, where running from scent to view he was pulled down in the Harrow-way road, in thirty-two minutes. The reason the Craven hounds

succeeded more fortunately than the Vine may be readily accounted for; they got away upon better terms with their fox. The Vine not having an efficient whipper-in, were dreadfully slack in leaving the coverts, and being slow in settling to the scent, lost the most important crisis.

The notoriety and fame which the late Mr. John Villebois attained as a sportsman, and the high esteem in which he was held as a country gentleman, very materially raised the character of Hampshire, in public estimation, as a hunting district, at a time when fox-hunting was growing into favour. His Majesty, George the Fourth, when Prince of Wales at one period resided at Kempshot Park, and was a member of the H. H., the abbreviated distinction of the Hampshire Hunt, and the Prince's Feathers, with which the buttons are still ornamented, are the emblems of royal patronage. His Royal Highness also keeping a pack of stag-hounds, attracted the wealthy men of fashion, and doubtless Hampshire was in those days the scene of much sylvan and jovial harmony. Mr. Villebois' hounds are described as having been very superior. At his decease, in 1837, they were left to his brother, Mr. F. Villebois, master of the Craven hounds, who in return presented his pack to Major Barrett to hunt the H. H. country with. The blood of the latter was principally from Mr. T. A. Smith's, the Honour-

able H. Moreton's, Mr. Osbaldeston's, and Mr. J. Villebois' kennels, some of which may be still traced in the present establishment, although, from changes of mastership, and divisions of the pack, it must be very considerably dispersed. In February, 1840, I met these hounds twice, once at Farley Mount, and once at Northwood Park; and from the very high encomiums I had heard of their huntsman, Richard Foster, was particularly anxious to have seen a run. But the elements decided against it, for it does not require the aid of my memorandum-book to refresh my memory that the weather on both days was remarkably boisterous. Foster had been huntsman to Lord Foley's hounds in Worcestershire, previously to his engagement with Mr. Villebois, and his talent was highly appreciated. When in Hampshire, of late years, he got a good deal upon the telegraph system, for which the open nature of the country is somewhat seductive. By sending a whipper-in forward to view the foxes as they pass from covert to covert, a vast deal of assistance may be given to hounds, but it is not a workmanlike method of hunting them. Having kept them seven years, Major Barrett gave the hounds up to Mr. Onslow, when the members of the hunt built new kennels at Ropley, to supply the place of those which had heretofore been occupied for many years at Armsworth, and

William Cox was engaged as huntsman. At this period, the Hursley country was portioned off, and entered upon by Mr. Cockburn, a very zealous sportsman from Devonshire. Mr. Onslow only kept the H. H. a short time, when Captain Haworth became the master, and retained Cox in his situation. Lord Gifford succeeded in 1847, bringing with him a pack of hounds, with which he had been showing a vast deal of sport in Herefordshire. These, in conjunction with the pack left by his predecessor, formed a very powerful body; and many a good run did they show. Lord Gifford's quickness and determination shone conspicuously; and I shall ever remember a run on the 18th of February, 1850, when they met at Lasham, and found in the wood, from whence they went away at a tremendous pace to Weston Common, where they crossed the line of a fresh fox, and the hounds divided. This being instantly noticed by Lord Gifford, and Grant, ever alive to his lordship's horn, the hounds that had got upon the fresh fox were immediately stopped, the body of the pack and their noble master holding on with their hunted fox by Blounce's Farm, over Swain's Hill nearly to Crondall, and killed between Farnham and Bentley, after a capital run of one hour and thirty-five minutes. The workmanlike manner in which the hounds were managed by Lord Gifford and his whipper-in, when

they divided, was the *ne plus ultra* of perfection; and Grant's quickness in getting forward with the tail hounds was equally a subject for praise. I have never seen any whipper-in do his work better than Grant, when whipping-in to Lord Gifford.

The country known as the H. H. is by no means one in which a hard-riding man has opportunities for distinction; neither did I ever think it was quite the kind of country to suit Lord Gifford; in which opinion it would appear his Lordship concurred; retaining it only three seasons, when he made an arrangement to hunt Herefordshire. However rough the latter country may be, it is a sporting one withal, capable of affording some good substantial old-fashioned runs, and of putting the qualities of hounds and the skill of their huntsman to the test. Lord Gifford met with a very rough reception early in the cub-hunting season, not from either the sportsmen or farmers, who were all rejoiced to receive him, but from a nest of hornets. They met at Trebandy on the 1st of October, where they found a leash of foxes, and presently settling to one of them, ran him to ground in a bank overhanging a brook, when his Lordship jumped off his horse to examine the place, and was momentarily assailed by a quantity of hornets which the unexpected visit had aroused from their nest in an old ash-pollard. Lord Gifford was glad to

retire from their territories with all imaginable precipitancy, but was unable to escape their venomous weapons, with which they attacked him about the head, neck, and hands. The gentlemen and farmers who were present extracted the stings, and the acuteness of the pain being allayed, determined that his hounds should, if possible, have blood, he drew for another fox, which, in an hour's time, was brought to hand, compensating him in some measure for the agony he had experienced. All who are acquainted with Lord Gifford are well aware of his pluck. After such a painful assault, most men would have gone home rather than have drawn again; and killing his second fox under such circumstances is a proof what enthusiasm will cause a master of hounds to undergo for the purpose of obtaining blood. It was some time before the inflammation produced by the stings of those venomous insects was entirely subdued.

Lord Gifford has shown great sport in Herefordshire, but the season of 1852 and 1853, which will ever be remembered in the annals of fox hunting as the wet season, was essentially unfavourable to that county; a great portion of it was continually flooded, and it was therefore impracticable to ride over it; and, the scent failing in the flooded grounds, they were not always able to finish satisfactorily with their foxes.

A new master of fox-hounds in the person of Mr. Wall came forward to hunt the Hampshire country on the resignation of Lord Gifford, and all the necessary arrangements were made for the campaign. Mr. Napper's hounds were purchased to fill up the vacancy occasioned by Lord Gifford taking his own hounds with him. Some men are doomed to be "doubly blessed," and such was Mr. Wall's case. No sooner were the arrangements completed for hunting the H. H. than the Hursley became vacant by the death of the worthy and highly esteemed master, Mr. Cockburn. This country being in the immediate vicinity of Mr. Wall's residence, he determined upon taking it, which, with the H. H., would entail the necessity of having a pack in the field six days in the week. He was, however, relieved from so heavy an engagement, by the gentlemen of the H. H. taking their country off his hands; Mr. Knight, of Chawton House, undertaking the principal responsibilities. They commenced hunting with fifty-five couples of hounds, about twenty couples of which were those purchased by Mr. Wall from Mr. Napper, but given up to the club on Mr. Wall taking to Mr. Cockburn's. They were a thick-set, cloggy sort of hound, as different as possible from the H. H., and however they might be calculated to hunt in strong deep woodlands, they were cer-

tainly not adapted to associate with the speedy hounds of the present day. Summers, who had been hunting the hounds for Mr. Napper, and previously to that for Mr. Richardson, in Sussex, came with them into Hampshire. Having but few opportunities of seeing his performances, and those entirely in the woodlands, I can only observe, that in the tedious and patience-provoking occupation of hunting a foil-running fox, he certainly excels.

The year 1852 ushered in another aspirant to the honours of M.F.H., and these hounds were transferred to Mr. R. Pearce, of South Warnborough, a young, but very energetic sportsman. Having begun early in life, it is to be hoped he will continue for many years. Such numerous changes must affect the pack seriously. Every master of hounds may be quite correct in the alteration which he is desirous to accomplish, but it is the alteration which occasions the mischief, and more particularly so, if there is not time for it to be matured before another system is introduced. Mr. Pearce has exercised good judgment by introducing a large draft from Earl Fitzhardinge's kennel, a sort which cannot fail to be particularly useful in Hampshire.

During my residence in this country, I was very anxious to have seen the Hambledon hounds, but from uncontrollable circumstances, I

was prevented. My desire to do so was augmented by various causes; it has been hunted by several masters of hounds of high repute among others by Sir Bellingham Graham and Mr. Osbaldeston; and at the time I was in the county by Mr. T. Smith, who may be said to have rescued it from becoming vacant. This, however, was some thirty years ago, since which time several other gentlemen have hunted it, while Mr. Smith was providing sport in the Craven and Pytchley countries; but again to return to the scene of his early experience in woodcraft. With a very insufficient subscription, this good sportsman afforded much sport, and relinquished his charge to Mr. Wall in the spring of 1852.

CHAP. XII.

Antiquity of Stag-hunting. —The Forest Laws. — Carting the Deer, why introduced. —Kennels at Swinley.—An Event in the Reign of Henry VIII. — Queen Elizabeth. — A tremendous Run in the Time of Charles II.—The Duke of York.—The Ascot Kennels. —George III. a zealous Stag-hunter.—Decline of the Establishment.—Restoration of the Establishment by His Royal Highness the Prince Regent. —Purchase of the Duke of Richmond's Hounds. — A superior Kind of Hound introduced. — Stopping the Hounds. — Adopted in Somervile's Days. —The Royal Huntsman.—Kennel Lameness. — Blood of the Royal Buck-hounds. — Hunting in the New Forest. —The Vale of Aylesbury. —Country in which the Royal Buck-hounds hunt —Their Popularity.—The late Lord Derby's Hounds.—The late Berkeley Stag-hounds.—An Aristocratic Establishment. — Berkeley Hunt Uniform.—Their Popularity. —Baron Rothschild's Hunt. — Superior Country.— Mr. Henry Bradley's Hounds. —The Neat Little Pack.—Their Pace. —The Cheltenham Stag-hounds. — Earl Fitzhardinge's Patronage.—The Bath Stag-hounds.— Attraction of the Duke of Beaufort's Hounds. — Stag-hunting in the North of Devon and Somerset.—Ancient Custom continued.—Depredations committed by the wild Stags. — Consequent Difficulties. — Exciting Scene. — Wildness of the Country. — Speculation heightens Excitement.— Knowledge of the Country.— Experience in Stag-hunting. — Recommendations of Stag-hunting. — Compared with Fox-hunting. — Stratagems of Foxes and Hares. — Subterfuges of Stags. — Extract from Somervile.

THE ancient and royal diversion of stag-hunting is coeval with the earliest annals of sporting in

the British empire. In honour of it, sovereigns and princes levied tyrannical inflictions on their subjects, but those evils have long since passed away, and we are content to read of them in history, and rejoice at their dissolution. The abolition of rigorous enactments adopted in the uncivilised feudal ages is deserving of common gratitude from all who make the excellence of our constitution a national and proverbial boast.

The Forest Laws were not, however, all repealed at once, although the exactions were relaxed. In the year 1814, Windsor Forest was disafforested; but it is only recently that similar concessions have been made respecting the New Forest, in Hampshire, and the Forest of Dean, in Gloucestershire.

When the preservation of deer in the royal forests became only partially enforced, and those places were no longer retained for the exclusive privileges of royal hunting, a new custom was introduced—that of keeping deer for the purpose, and conveying them to the place of meeting in a cart, there to be enlarged at an appointed hour. This obviates the evils which previously existed in the preservation of the game, and also the necessity of harbouring the stag, and driving him from his lair with two or three hounds called tufters, according to ancient usage, which must have entailed much uncertainty, and frequently

occupied much time. Yet it should be admitted that it divests the amusement of the wildness of character, uncertainty, and enthusiasm inseparable from legitimate sporting. Conveying the stag in a cart is somewhat synonymous with turning down a bag fox.

The royal buck-hounds, though kept in the neighbourhood of Windsor for many ages, were formerly kept at Swinley, where I believe the kennels were in the reigns of Henry the Eighth and Queen Elizabeth, both of whom are said to have taken great delight in the chase. It is on record, that Henry the Eighth, after a severe chase, dined with the old Abbot of Reading, to the ruin of the latter. In the year 1684, during the reign of Charles the Second, a wild deer was found at Swinley, in Windsor Forest, and was hunted thence into Essex, where he was taken at Thorndon Hall, the seat of Lord Petre. The chase led through Amersham and Chesham, in Buckinghamshire, Redbourn and Hatfield, in Hertfordshire, and ended at Brentwood. There was a large field out in the morning, but only five went to the end, and they remained for the night at Lord Petre's. The Duke of York, brother to Charles, was out on the occasion, and was present when the deer was taken. The distance must have exceeded seventy-five miles.

The Ascot kennels have been in use many years.

George the Third was an enthusiastic admirer of stag-hunting, and during the early part of his reign the establishment was in great force; but at one period it fell into a very ineffective state. That, however, was speedily altered by his Royal Highness the Prince Regent, who in the year 1814 commanded the purchase of the Duke of Richmond's fox-hounds, which were forthwith installed in the Ascot kennels. This gave a fresh impetus to stag-hunting, as the hounds which had previously been used for the purpose were of a coarse, heavy description, with, as I imagine, a very near alliance to the blood-hound. In the reign of George the Third and his royal predecessors, it was the practice to stop the hounds whenever they outpaced their sovereign;—an operation which could not be on all occasions effected with high-bred fox-hounds, even if it were desired; but the plan of stopping them has been for many years abandoned.

As Somervile mentions this custom, it was, doubtless, practised in the time of George the Second.

"If haply then
Too far escap'd, and the gay courtly train
Behind are cast, the huntsman's clanging whip
Stops full their bold career. Passive they stand
Unmoved, an humble, an obsequious crowd,
As if by stern Medusa gazed to stones."

Mr. Charles Davis has for many years presided as huntsman to the royal buck-hounds. His fame is so widely spread that it would be vain in me to attempt to increase it. Few men are so amply gifted by nature with the symmetry of a horseman. Although rather tall, he is of very spare make, with thin, lengthy legs and thighs; and his seat in the saddle is perfect.

For many years the royal hounds were grievously afflicted with kennel-lameness. Every remedy that could be suggested (except that which I have alluded to in these pages as having been successful with Mr. Jaspers and Mr. Roberts's harriers) has been adopted; and there is no doubt they have been, to a certain extent, productive of good results, perhaps as much so as the locality will permit. The usual complement of hounds is about fifty couples; and there is a good deal of Mr. Foljambe's and Mr. T. A. Smith's blood in these kennels; but of late years they have bred nearly all the hounds they required to enter.

Until within the last few years, these hounds were accustomed to pay a visit in the spring of the year to the New Forest, where they hunted the wild stags, after the custom of the ancients; and it was an occasion which attracted a vast number of sportsmen. They also generally took an annual trip to the Vale of Aylesbury, where, favoured with grass, they had clipping runs. But

those days are gone by; and as that country is now regularly hunted by Baron Rothschild, the admirers of stag-hunting residing in that quarter enjoy a succession of sport, whereas previously they had only occasional tastes of it. The country to which the appointments of the royal buck-hounds are principally confined, is that around the Ascot kennels, extending from Beaconsfield on the north, to Woking on the south. Hayes is the nearest point to London, and the Warren House the most distant in a westerly direction. In the neighbourhood of Windsor, Salt Hill, Slough, Riching's Park, Beaconsfield, Gerard's Cross, Red Hill, Denham, and Uxbridge, there is a fair proportion of grass, and in many parts some strong fences. In that about Ascot, Swinley (comprising Bagshot Heath), Chobham, Woking, and Bracknell, it is of a sandy, peaty character, which in wet weather is exceedingly deep and distressing to horses. There is much heath, and likewise several extensive fir plantations, which are impediments to first-rate sport. These hounds have been a great acquisition to the admirers of stag-hunting residing in London, and particularly to the officers quartered in and near to Windsor; perhaps more so previously to the establishment of railroads, which convey them most expeditiously into fox-hunting quarters.

The next pack of stag-hounds which demand

notice were those of Earl Derby, the grandfather of the present Earl, who established them about the year 1780, and kept them with princely magnificence till 1830, when declining health and the infirmities of age precluded his lordship from participating in the sport, and he presented the hounds and deer to his old and trusty huntsman, Jonathan Griffin. They were kept on two years by subscription, with Mr. Maberly as the principal manager; but although there was no deficiency of funds, that gentleman declined the management, and no one else being disposed to embark in the responsibilities, they were sold at Tattersall's in 1832. During the time Lord Derby kept them, the kennels were at the Oaks, and their sport was principally confined to the county of Surrey.

When the Honourable Moreton Berkeley, now Earl Berkeley, and his brother the Honourable Grantley Berkeley came of an age to hunt, they kept a pack of harriers at the family seat at Cranford; but they were soon converted into staghounds. It was a truly aristocratic establishment. The earl hunted them, and Mr. Grantley Berkeley whipped in. Another brother, the Honourable Henry Berkeley, joined them for a short time, taking the occupation of second whipper-in. When he withdrew, he was succeeded by Mr. Henry Wombwell, who officiated as whipper-in. They all wore the orange plush or ancient tawny coats

of the Berkeley family, with black velvet hunting caps. This continued about twelve years, the only change in it being that Mr. Grantley Berkeley became master of the hounds and hunted them himself, the earl and Mr. Henry Wombwell whipping in to him. They afforded abundant sport, and were highly popular. About 1829 or 1830, they were given up, and Mr. Grantley Berkeley entered into arrangements to hunt the Oakley country, vacated by the then Marquis of Tavistock, now Duke of Bedford. Mr. Grantley Berkeley gave them up in 1834, to attend to the urgent calls of parliamentary duties.

The far-famed Baron Rothschild's stag-hounds enliven the country in the neighbourhood of Aylesbury; their kennels are at Mentmore, and the establishment is vastly popular with London stag-hunters. They are kept in the most liberal manner, and are in every respect deserving the esteem in which they are held. The superiority of their country, in the Vale of Aylesbury, principally grass, is a great attraction, and the facility with which they can be reached by railway at all their places of meeting is a great accommodation.

A few years since a very clever little pack, all "ladies," was kept at Leamington by Mr. Henry Bradley. If any stag-hunter is sceptical concerning the capabilities of small hounds, he might have been convinced by the operations of these. They

scarcely exceeded twenty inches in height, but the pace they could go over the grass grounds at Kites Hardwick, Priors Marston or Ladbroke, was quite extraordinary, and for stoutness they could not be excelled. They were hunted in a very workmanlike style by their worthy master, and the establishment was in every respect ably conducted. The utmost neatness prevailed throughout every department.

Cheltenham has also, till the present season, had a pack of stag-hounds, to which the Earl Fitzhardinge, with his accustomed liberality, afforded support by finding the deer, and also occasional drafts of hounds, although his lordship never joined them in the field. A pack is likewise kept at Bath, but as few gentlemen are willing to undertake the management and defray the greater portion of the expenses out of their own pockets, some difficulty is experienced in continuing them. Nevertheless, Captain West contends against these obstacles with great perseverance. The Cheltenham stag-hounds were certainly an accommodation to sportsmen residing there during the months when Earl Fitzhardinge's hounds are in their Berkeley country. But at Bath it is rather a different affair. The Duke of Beaufort's hounds are generally within reach, if not by the road, at all events by the rail; the amount of an annual subscription to stag-hounds will defray the ex-

penses by rail, and it certainly does not involve any dereliction of taste to prefer hunting with the duke, to a pack of stag-hounds, let them be ever so well appointed.

The north of Devonshire and Somersetshire is the only part of England where stag-hunting is conducted according to the original fashion, where the game is harboured by a man accustomed to that duty, who is requited according to ancient usage for his service, and who can tell by the slot the age of the stag. The practices appear to be precisely similar to those which are described by Edmund of Langley, from whose work I have made some extracts in the early pages of this volume. This must certainly be the most exciting mode of pursuit; but it appears to be going fast to decay, despite the exertions of several zealous supporters of the time-honoured sport. The wandering propensities of the deer in their wild state cause them to travel many miles in search of favourite food; consequently there is great difficulty in preserving them. I am informed that the damage they do is often considerable; for on entering a field of turnips, they will only partially consume the roots, leaving the remainder, which soon rots; and if a stag only takes a single bite at a turnip, it may be readily conjectured that he will taste a great number before his hunger is appeased; and as cultivation

is gradually spreading up the sides of the moors, the injuries will year by year become more extensive. Their company, therefore, is not welcomed by the small farmers, who require compensation for the damages they sustain; but considering that it is the last relict of the ancient custom of stag-hunting, it will be a subject of much regret if some remunerative arrangements cannot be effected.

Those who have participated in it represent this kind of hunting as highly exciting, and I can readily conceive it to be so. To view one of these splendid red deer come bounding from the thicket with all the energy and confidence of a wild and free animal, pursued at that moment by none but the tufters, whom by his looks he appears to regard with insignificant contempt, must be an interesting scene. And then when the anxiously-waiting pack is laid on the scent, the pace is no doubt terrific. To follow them over so wild a country, perchance a distance of twenty or thirty miles, where treacherous bogs and impassable ravines impede the progress of the most determined horsemen, must afford a zest immeasurably superior to that which is experienced in the ordinary mode of stag-hunting. Not that I, for one, should desire to ride constantly over a country that cannot in most parts be crossed upon a horse that is entitled to the name of a hunter; yet the

speculation, if I may use such an expression, of falling in with hounds, to enjoy their company in ridable places is perfectly consistent with this species of hunting. Those who are acquainted with the country must possess manifest advantages over strangers; in fact, it is quite evident that bogs, dingles, ravines, and other impracticable passes, by whatever provincial name or names they may be distinguished, can only be avoided or negotiated by persons who are intimately acquainted with their locality. Not being a professed stag-hunter myself, I must plead guilty to some diffidence in discussing the subject, but I must observe, it is not a sport to my taste. I may sum up my experience of it with a notice of the very few occasions on which I have joined in the amusement. With the Aldenham buck-hounds, as they were styled, and which I have noticed as the connecting link of what are now known as the Wheatland hounds, I may have hunted about a dozen times, but that was quite thirty years ago. Capital fun we had; and be it remembered, it was always with outlying deer which had escaped from the park, and which were found in coppices in a manner very similar to the practice still continued in North Devon, except that the whole body of the hounds were thrown into covert to draw for their game. Twice I have met the Royal stag-hounds when George IV. was King,

and once during her present Majesty's reign, in October, 1849, before they had commenced regular operations for the season. The deer was enlarged at Southill, and taken at Everley, after a good hunting run. I was out twice with Mr. Bradley's hounds, and once with the Cheltenham stag-hounds during the time they were under the management of Mr. Barton.

To those who are intent upon a gallop, and to whom time is of importance, stag-hunting is particularly adapted. The stag is seldom enlarged till twelve o'clock, and a run of three hours must be sufficient for the greatest glutton. Yet compared with fox-hunting, there is a tameness about it — an artificial character not quite in accordance with the true spirit of a sportsman. Keeping an animal in a semi-domesticated state, conveying him to the place of meeting in a cart, to be enlarged and hunted by hounds, is certainly not in accordance with my views of legitimate sport. Hunting an animal of such a size that he can constantly be viewed, detracts vastly from the association of ideas connected with the sagacity of the hound. In the little experience I have had, I have never seen hounds, when following the stag, run together, which failing is confirmed by the acknowledgment of all those with whom I have conversed, and who are well able to form an opinion. The perfection of hunting, in the estimation of one

accustomed to fox-hunting, is certainly lost when the pack do not run together and carry a good head. The stratagems of the fox and also of the hare are wonderful, and occasion a vast deal of excitement, besides the talent of the huntsman which they call in requisition, as well as the instinctive faculties of the hounds. The stag resorts to few subterfuges, with the exception of the unavailing one of running through a herd of his own species if he has an opportunity, and when distressed, provokingly taking soil; the most objectionable feature in a run, and an unsatisfactory termination of a day's sport, which Somervile thus describes:

"He vents the cooling stream, and up the breeze
Urges his course with eager violence;
Then takes the soil, and plunges in the flood
Precipitant; down the mid stream he wafts
Along, till (like a ship distress'd, that runs
Into some winding creek) close to the verge
Of a small island, for his weary feet
Sure anchorage he finds; there skulks immers'd
His nose alone above the wave draws in
The vital air; all else beneath the flood
Conceal'd and lost, deceives each prying eye
Of man or brute."

CHAP. XII.

A Taste for Hunting.—The Lord Mayor of London in Ancient Times.—Impediments to Hunting from London in former Days.—Facilities afforded by the Railways.—A Letter from a London sportsman.—Remarks on the Railways.—Travelling Horses on the Roads injurious to them.—Accommodation of the North-western Line.—Hunting from London with the Pytchley, Warwickshire, Atherstone, and Quorn.—Baron Rothschild's Hounds.—Hunting with the Baron.—Inconveniences in by-gone Days.—Customs with the Dublin Garrison Stag-hounds.—Hunting in Hampshire.—Numerous Packs of Hounds in that County.—Stations on the South-western Railway.—Season Hunting Tickets.—The Great Western Line.—Hounds within Reach.—The Brighton Line and Hounds.—The Northern Line and Hounds.—Another Letter from a London sportsman.—His Motive for Hunting.—First Day in Surrey.—His Opinion.—Purchases a Hunter.—Hunts with the Queen's Stag-hounds.—Engages a Hunting Groom, and increases his Stud.—Disappointments, Vexations Losses.—Discovers the Groom's Incompetence.—Discharges the Groom.—Keeps his Hunters in London, and travels them by Rail.—Experiences Advantages.—Remarks on the Letters.—Travelling Horses by Rail on Hunting Days.—Care of Horses on the Rail.—Gruel.—Mashes.—Dressing.—Plans for Hunting from London.—The most eligible Hunting Countries.—Hunting Grooms.—Two Men to dress a Hunter.—Keeping Hunters in the Country.—Economy.—Hunting Livery-stables.—Hiring Hunters.—Harriers in Essex.

In whatever situation an Englishman fixes upon to reside, his love for the chase accompanies him.

If it be his fate or his taste to lead a country life, he must be a melancholy creature unless he beguiles some of his leisure hours with the sports of the field. The murky, dull, oppressive atmosphere of the metropolis does not extinguish the *amor venandi;* peradventure it serves to increase it by the contrast it affords to the pure air of the fields, and the elastic, exciting, enthusiastic, exhilarating, bounding, bracing, buoyant accompaniments of the chase. We are informed, that many centuries ago, the Lord Mayor of the great city kept a pack of hounds, and that Lincoln's Inn Fields, St. James's, and May Fair, were the favourite places of meeting; that the civic dignitaries and functionaries had ample food whereon to feed their venatic appetite. Increase of population drove the game further a-field, and however the ardour of the mind might be attracted by sylvan pastimes, the difficulty of enjoying them, in consequence of the distance, precluded many from making the attempt. To trace the means which were available for sportsmen residing in London through remote ages, would be a task imposing much tedious research to very little purpose; it is quite sufficient to mention the difficulties they had to encounter, up to a time considerably beyond the first quarter of the present century, and compare them with the facilities of the present day. Previously to the establish-

ment of railways, the principal packs within reach of London were the Royal Stag-hounds; the late Earl Derby's stag-hounds; the Old Berkeley fox-hounds, given up in 1842; those which hunted the country now hunted by Lord Dacre; the late Mr. Conyers; the Surrey Union; the Surrey fox-hounds, and the Surrey stag-hounds. There might have been some others, which I do not recollect to have heard of; that, however, is immaterial; but to meet any of them, it was imperatively necessary to send a horse to sleep out on the night previous to hunting, and it was by no means improbable, if the hounds ran to a distant point, that he would also have to remain out the night after hunting; a most vexatious necessity; for nothing tends to injure a hunter's condition more than a journey on the day after a severe run with hounds. It is a time when the loose box is most essentially necessary for the resting of his wearied and jaded limbs. Under such circumstances, a horse would not be fit to come again oftener than once in a fortnight; therefore, to make it a general practice was out of the question. The only alternative was, that of keeping horses in the country within reach of whatever pack of hounds were chosen to hunt with. The Royal Stag-hounds at one period took precedence in the estimation of the aristocratic and fashionable devotees of Diana,

and they still have a few fixtures, Hayes, Bedfont, and the Magpies, within about thirteen miles of London; but their best country cannot be reached under twenty miles. Croydon formerly attracted the fast men from the east; and fox-hunting, as I have been informed, was perpetuated in those parts; but I speak not from experience, never having hunted in Surrey, with the exception of a few days with Colonel Sumners' hounds.

Irrespective of the inconvenience connected with the horse department, another obstacle stood prominently in the way of the London sportsman's pleasure, that of getting to the place of meeting himself. To ride a hack twenty miles to meet hounds, hunt all day and return afterwards, was an exertion few would venture to encounter. A gig was one mode of conveyance, posting another; the first uncomfortable, the latter expensive. I think I have now stated sufficient to show how many difficulties beset the sportsman in former days, who was compelled to reside in London; we will now take a view of his amended position in 1854.

Never having hunted from London myself, I cannot speak from experience; and therefore, to avoid leading any of my readers astray, I have sought information from gentlemen accustomed to do so, and therefore insert their kind communications.

"DEAR SIR,

"As you requested me, I send you the result of my experience in hunting from London.

"To the metropolitan sportsman of the present day steam (or rather the production through its agency, the rail) is of incalculable value. It was at first considered that the railways would eventually result in the total destruction of fox-hunting, as the trains would sweep the lines at the time the hounds were in chase of their game, to the utter annihilation of the whole pack, if they did not operate as a check upon the wily animal in making his point altogether. Experience has, however, proved that such is not the case, or a rare occurrence. Not only do they enable the Londoner to select a superior pack of hounds, and a good country as the arena of his day's diversion; but they afford facilities previously unattempted to the provincialist, to transport himself and his horse to distant meets of adjoining hunts far beyond his reach in former times, even had he sent his horse over night to sleep at the nearest hotel—a practice which was fraught with great inconvenience and considerable expense, as, in addition to the wear and tear on the road to the legs of a used hunter, I have known many horses off their feed in a strange stable; besides which, the change of temperature in winter which he would have to encounter, would be very likely to operate prejudicially upon his condition. At the present period, a man residing in London may on any day in the week select to hunt with any of the numerous packs of fox or stag-hounds within fifty miles in the

vicinity of the various railways, and either take his horse on the line, and return after hunting with a day-ticket, or send him the day before.

"The North-western line I should say decidedly affords the greatest advantages; as on that line a man may reach Lord Dacres's hounds in the neighbourhood of Watford, Boxmoor, or Berkhampstead, at the cost, self and horse, of from 15*s.* to 1*l.* 4*s.*; or Lord Lonsdale's fox-hounds, his lordship's harriers, and Baron Rothschild's stag-hounds, from Tring or Leighton Buzzard, at from 30*s.* to 35*s.*; from Leighton Buzzard or Bletchley, Mr. Selby Lownde's hounds could have been reached last year (since which this country has been taken by Lord Southampton and added to his own). From Wolverton, and then extending beyond the circuit of fifty miles, Blisworth and Weedon take you within reach of Lord Southampton's original country and the Pytchley; from Rugby, other parts of the Pytchley, the Atherstone and Warwickshire; from Aylesbury (a branch of the North-western line), may be reached Baron Rothschild's stag-hounds and Mr. Drake's; from Winslow and Buckingham on the Bletchley and Oxford line, Lord Southampton's and Mr. Drake's; on the Bletchley and Bedford line the Oakley may be reached.

"I have frequently hunted from London with the Pytchley, Warwickshire, Atherstone, and Quorn hounds, leaving Euston Square by the half-past six train in the morning, and returning the same evening, and have occasionally gone down by the nine o'clock express with Sir R. Sutton, when the hounds

have met at twelve o'clock, in order to enable him to travel by this train; this, however, is an exceptional case. I have met Baron Rothschild's hounds at seven o'clock in the morning, in the neighbourhood of the kennels at Mentmore, (about three miles from the Leighton station), and having had a very good run of one hour and a half over the finest grass country in England, taking the deer about four miles beyond Aylesbury, have been back in London about half-past eleven in the morning; on the other hand, I have left London as late as twelve o'clock to meet these hounds in the Vale of Aylesbury, and seen a run of two hours, returning to London in time for a late dinner. This proves that the Vale of Aylesbury affords facilities for hunting to a man whose time is valuable that no other country can afford; as although the usual hour these hounds meet is about half-past eleven, yet the baron has frequently a bye-day, especially at the end of the season, when the meet is arranged so as to enable one to return to London before one o'clock. I remember eleven years since, when Captain Conningham kept the Surrey stag-hounds, leaving London at one o'clock in the afternoon on a hack to meet these hounds at Walton Heath. This deer was enlarged at three o'clock, and afforded a capital run of two hours and a half; Captain Conningham, who was in the 11th (Lord Cardigan's regiment), then quartered at Hounslow, being obliged to appear on parade in the morning, these hounds frequently met as late as one, two, or three o'clock. The Dublin Garrison stag-hounds, for the same reason, never meet earlier than one o'clock.

I have, however, never heard of any complaint made by the gentlemen who hunt with that pack, of the day being too short to test the powers of endurance of their gallant steeds. At the pace these hounds go (be it remembered they are never stopped when once laid on, as in this country), forty-five minutes are enough to satisfy most men and horses also. The officers are also in the habit of larking to the meet; on some occasions I have heard running a drag about eight miles in forty-five minutes, over the strong country in the neighbourhood of Dublin.

"With the exception of Yorkshire and Devonshire, there is no county in England where so *many packs are kennelled as in Hampshire*, which is a singular coincidence, inasmuch as its area is perhaps rather less than the average, and it is not celebrated as a crack country; there being but little grass, and the hill country being very adverse to scent. There are, however, many staunch fox preserves, as well as good sportsmen. At the present time there are nine packs which hunt in this county; viz., Mr. Assheton Smith, of Tidworth, who also hunts part of Wilts; the Vine; the H. H.; the Hambledon; the Hursley; the New Forest; Mr. Wheble's, and Mr. Garth's, between whom the late Sir John Cope's country is divided; they also hunt part of Berks; and the Isle of Wight fox-hounds. Colonel George Wyndham used also to hunt part of Hampshire, having one or two meets in Woolmer Forest, although this country has not been hunted for some seasons, and I understand is claimed by the H. H. and the Hambledon Hunts also. The

South-western Railway affords great facilities for hunting with either of the above packs in Hampshire, as nearly all the meets of the H. H. can be reached from Alton (a branch of this line), or from Winchfield, Basingstoke, or on Tuesday from the Winchester stations, by the train which leaves the Waterloo station at seven o'clock. Mr. Garth's and Mr. Wheble's hounds may generally be reached from the Maidenhead, Twyford, Reading, Mortimer, Farnborough, Winchfield, or Basingstoke stations. The Vine from Basingstoke or the Andover Road stations. Mr. Assheton Smith's, about three days in a fortnight, from the Andover Road station at Clatford Oak-cuts, Longstock, Hurstbourne Tarrant, &c.

"The Hursley, from the Winchester station, two days in the week, Mondays and Fridays. The Hambledon generally two days a week, from Winchester or Bishopstoke. The New Forest occasionally at certain periods adjoining the Southampton and Dorchester line, which passes through the forest, or by the Southampton and Salisbury line, at the Chandlers Ford or Romsey stations.

"The system of issuing hunting tickets at a lower rate than season tickets for a period of six months, has been of great advantage to fox-hunters residing in London. On the North-western line, tickets were given to Leighton, Tring and Aylesbury, for 10*l.* for the season; and I understand this privilege is to be extended next season to Blisworth, Weedon and Rugby.

"On the Great Western line may be reached, from

Slough and Maidenhead, the Queen's Stag-hounds, and from Farringdon Road and Didcot, Mr. Morrell' the Old Berkshire; from Newbury and Hungerford, the Craven; from Swindon and Cricklade, the Vale of White Horse; also the Duke of Beaufort's, near Chippenham, whose meets principally lie near the Gloster line of rail; many of these meets may be reached from London by the early trains in the morning.

"On the Brighton line, the Old Surrey at Croydon, Reigate and from Dorking, on the South Eastern. The Crawley and the Horsham on the Brighton line, from the Three Bridges station. The Surrey Union likewise, from Guildford to Ash, on the line to Farnham.

"On the Direct Northern line, within twenty miles of London, the Puckeridge; also Mr. Henley Greaves', late Mr. Conyers'; further down the line Lord Fitzwilliam's.

"Yours," &c.

"London, June, 1853.

"Dear Sir,

"You have often asked me why I keep my horses in London during the winter. To explain this, I must give you a sketch of my hunting career.

"In my twenty-eighth year, I found myself obliged to live in London. My property was very moderate. I had no occupation; and having but little taste for literary pursuits, I had great difficulty in employing my time. In this position, although I was altogether ignorant of riding, I purchased a horse, and amused

myself for some months riding in the Parks. This I tired of in the winter, and thought, if I knew the meets of some private pack of hounds, my horse would carry me. I very soon found, among my acquaintances, a gentleman who rode in Surrey. It happened that, the following week, the fox-hounds met at Locks Bottom; and my friend very kindly made arrangements that my horse should be taken to Bromley to sleep; and the liveryman at whose stable my horse stood found me a pony to get to Bromley on in the morning. The following morning I therefore made my first appearance at the covert side. I was rather late, owing to my horse, just before leaving the high road, selecting the dirtiest part to make a false step and throw me. Fortunately we were neither of us hurt; but I was very dirty, and in this plight I presented myself at the meet, where my friend was waiting alone, the hounds having been thrown into covert close by.

"Surrey has long maintained its character for sure and quick finds; and this was no exception, for in ten minutes hounds and horses were away, and I found myself in a ploughed field, galloping as fast as my horse could. I got through a gate into a second field; but here I was pounded. I was quite ignorant of putting my horse at a fence; and he seemed equally so of jumping one. After some time a gentleman returned with, 'Well, it's all over. We have had a capital run,' &c. &c. I could make no reply, but jogged back to the inn, jumped on my pony, and reached home in very good time for dinner.

"My first day convinced me that riding to hounds was a sport I should like, but that I had a very great deal to learn; and when I next met my friend, he kindly told me 'it was very necessary that either the rider or horse should understand his business; that if both were ignorant, nothing but difficulties would assail us; whereas a little knowledge on either side would quickly improve both.'

"I took the hint at once; and before the next day was over, 'Osborn,' of Gray's Inn, supplied me with as good a little horse as ever went across country. He was not very fast; but nothing could get him down: and to this animal's cleverness I attribute the nerve I have since ridden with. To tell you the falls I got, although my horse never came down, would occupy a volume: but I persevered, from the absurd belief that a seat across country was only to be gained by this method; whereas I am now convinced that a man at any age may learn to ride to hounds by taking lessons of a hunting riding-master, and thus save himself the bruises and hurts he must otherwise encounter.

"I placed my hunter in a livery-stable in Surrey, where 80 to 100 horses always stood. I rode three days a fortnight to fox-hounds. The gentlemen in the field, without an exception, showed me the greatest kindness; and hunting, I soon decided, was the finest sport I had ever enjoyed. At the end of the season, my horse was rested; and during the summer I purchased a second hunter, which, when in condition, fully bore out the character given with

him. The commencement of this season found me possessed of two hunters. My London hack I had broken to harness; and he took me down on hunting-mornings to the stable where my horses stood. I hunted in this country for two years; and, with the exception of a severe cut from a flint, which laid one of my horses up for some time, I rode regularly to hounds three times a week.

"I now went, 'just for one day,' to see the 'Queen's,' at that time under the management of Lord Kinnaird; and having a capital run in the grass country induced me at once to move my horses to Hayes, where a person was recommended to me to take charge of them with others belonging to gentlemen who regularly rode to the stag-hounds.

"I rode regularly with these hounds, and went with them into the Vale of Aylesbury, for their, at that time, annual week's hunting. This country I found so superior that, although I hunted through the season with the Queen's, I longed often for the large pastures which the Vale presented. The next summer I endeavoured to make arrangements; but there being at that time no hunting livery-stables in the Vale, I looked about for a groom who thoroughly understood his business. I succeeded, as I thought, in this, and engaged a middle-aged man. He was married; but his wife and family were to be left in London, and he was to travel the country with me.

"Early in November my servant left London with three hunters. The horses were, I think, as good as any that I have ever been possessed of; but, arising,

as I now believe, entirely from my servant's ignorance, nothing but misfortune attended me. Within a fortnight my best horse was reported blind, my young mare would not eat, and the other, going wrong, I had changed for one altogether out of condition; and the twenty-eighth day from my leaving London found my servant back again. I had, during that short time, in fact, knocked up five horses; and prudence prevented me continuing a career so ruinous.

"I considered this as a run of ill luck that will attend all at times, and, to make the best of it, kept only two young mares, and, towards the end of the season, had a few days with the Queen's hounds. My groom was the last to whom I thought I could attribute blame. He induced me to change my horses often; my tradesmen were blamed or changed by him with every appearance of consulting only my interest.

"I now purchased a fine, powerful, well-bred horse —my servant could not even find fault with him— and as I had now three sound young horses, I anticipated a more successful season. To each condition-balls were given freely; and day by day, as the month of October passed, I had reason to be better pleased with the account given me of their progress. This state of things was not to last long; for on going one morning to the stable, my favourite mare 'was all wrong;' and on the vet. seeing her, he proclaimed the beast to be suffering from enlargement of the heart, persuaded me to allow her to be moved to his stable, where she was cupped and physicked. She was then reported as unfit for ever hunting again;

and I was recommended to part with her. That very night I had a communication from a customer of the vet.'s; and the next morning a bargain was struck between us; he taking the mare, sick as she then was, having first contracted with the doctor to get her well for a stated sum.

"My misfortunes did not end here. My new horse was reported to me as refusing his food; and, as my groom now announced, 'He's no use to us;' and so here again I was forced to change. It, however, happened that a friend wanted an animal, admired mine, heard my story of his non-feeding propensity, asked my price, and took him off my hands.

"Three days after I met my friend; asked, of course, how the horse fed. 'Why,' said he, 'I particularly noticed him. The first day he came to me he ate five feeds, and looked round for more. I rode him forty miles this morning; and the last mile he was as fresh as the first. I never possessed an animal of such endurance,' &c. &c. This was quite enough. I now for the first time questioned the honesty of my groom. He excused himself by hinting the horse might have been ill from change of stable or water, or something else that an artful man has ready on similar emergencies.

"A second year I trusted him in the country, but within three weeks he returned home, three or four horses being knocked up. I now, therefore, attributed all my misfortune to bad stable-management. I now found it necessary to pay myself some attention to this, and gained on every occasion all the information I

could. My groom and I soon parted. I only possessed one mare, when he left: her I sent at once to livery hunting stables. When her arrived there, in spite of all the condition-balls that had been forced down her throat, she was not fit to go. She, however, daily improved, and carried me one day a week to stag-hounds through that season, and finished quite fresh enough to hack through the summer. I engaged a young man as groom, who only professed to strap to a horse, and turn him out clean. I ordered every thing in the stable, and discarded physic and messing of all kinds.

"The following autumn I dreaded a repetition of the ill luck of the two preceding winters, and therefore determined to keep my horses at home, and try what hunting I could meet with, travelling them by rail. I soon found from London the railways offer great facilities. The Eastern Counties gives me the command of Essex; the Brighton line takes me into Surrey; the Great Western always puts me within distance of the Queen's, and very frequently the Old Berkshire; while the North Western commands Lord Lonsdale's country, Baron Rothschild's, the best meets of Lord Southampton, very frequently Lord Dacres's, and occasionally the Oakley.

"I find my railway expenses—a day ticket for my horse and first class return for myself—for thirty miles, from 1*l.* 1*s.* to 1*l.* 5*s.*; for forty miles, from 1*l.* 7*s.* to 1*l.* 10*s.* I scarcely ever exceed this distance, for a man must be a glutton if he is dissatisfied with this range.

"The only caution I take in travelling my horse is,

having a good suit of clothes for him to travel in. My groom walks him to the railway in the morning, and knows the hours of my probable arrival in the evening: he is always waiting there, and takes my horse home, where every attention is paid to him. In the country, I find a servant superfluous: the ostler of the inns I stop at will get the horse comfortable under my direction.

"I do not mean to state for a moment but that a horse would be saved fatigue if he was as well attended to in the country as when he reaches home; but I cannot depend on this, and therefore I am convinced my personal inspection of the stable more than compensates for the additional fatigue the horse undergoes; added to this, if an accident happens, I have him at home, and, as we generally have a frost of a month or so, it is then to me a source of very great pleasure to go when I please into my stable.

"It is now many years that I have made the railways my covert hackneys. I am never so much behind time that the hounds are away on my reaching the meet, and I find my horses carry me as safely as those always standing in country quarters.

"After hunting, I consider some little care necessary. I make it a rule to see my horse have a bucket of gruel, and the top dirt rubbed off before his clothing is put on. I am also particular in not allowing the animal to stand about while a railway carriage is turned to the siding to load him. This I get arranged before the horse leaves the stable; and to these little precautions I attribute the good luck that has always attended my horses travelling.

"And having now told my story, I trust you will not again attempt to argue against my plan; but, if you feel inclined to have an occasional day from London, I shall be delighted to meet you at the railway station, and assist in superintending your travelling arrangements.

"Ever yours."

Both these letters are so thoroughly explanatory of the means which a sportsman residing in London may avail himself of to enjoy his hunting, that many additions from me would be superfluous. I must, however, introduce a few words on the effect which travelling by rail produces on the condition of horses, and the treatment which they require. In the case of a horse being conveyed by rail to the vicinity of the place of meeting on the morning of hunting, it entails the necessity of his being disturbed at an early hour to go through the regular process of dressing and feeding. On returning, if the distance from London exceeds fifty miles, it is scarcely possible to reach the terminus before eight o'clock in the evening, unless a fox is found and affords a run early in the day; or that the day's sport is abbreviated by leaving before the hounds have finished drawing, a mortification which few persons would inflict upon themselves, having incurred the expense and trouble of a journey to enjoy a full day's sport. When time will permit, it is very desirable to

have a horse thoroughly dressed at the stables connected with the railway station prior to his being placed on the line; and by all means his legs and feet should be washed, and afterwards bandaged. To perform all this, I think it is almost imperative to take a servant down. In my experience of ostlers at inns, I never found many of them of much use in dressing dirty hunters; not, perhaps, in all cases from a disinclination to work, because an extra quart of beer will always excite that energy, but because they do not know how to set about it, and very frequently, when assisting my own servants, and consequently acting under their directions, I have noticed that many ostlers are more in the way than otherwise. On the subject of gruel I must also make a remark, that it should on all occasions be boiled, whether it be made of wheat-flour or oatmeal; the former of which I prefer. When made in the manner very commonly practised—that is, some oatmeal stirred up with a small quantity of cold water, to which boiling water is added, and cold water again supplied to make it of the required temperature—it contains no virtue whatever; in fact, will sometimes produce cholic. It is the mucilage formed by boiling in which the balsamic and nutritive properties are contained; and that mucilage must be produced before the substance is givento the horse; in other words, he

cannot concoct it in his stomach. Many of my friends have argued this point with me, assuming, if the horse takes a pint of oatmeal, which, being divested of the husks, may be considered equivalent in amount of nourishment to a quart of oats, and that pint of oatmeal is infused in water, he will derive the same benefit he would from a quart of oats, which is by no means the case. When a horse eats a quart of oats, he masticates them: they pass into the stomach in the ordinary way, through the agency of those functions which are provided by nature for conveying food to that receptacle, and, finally, by the digestive organs, they assist in the nourishment of the body. But oatmeal infused in tepid water is vastly different in its quality. In that liquid state it contains very little nourishment, and, quickly passing into the intestines, is carried off like undigested food. Similar remarks apply to bran mashes.

There are several objects attained by having horses thoroughly dressed before they are put into the railway boxes. Much of the risk of taking cold is diminished. The dirt and perspiration, clogging up the pores of the skin, must have an injurious effect upon the coat, and consequently the system generally, if suffered to remain when the horses are not in action; and, if last not least, the great saving of time when they arrive at their home stables, where, very little being requi-

site in the way of dressing, two active men will be able to perform everything that is necessary, and have a horse shut up in half an hour. Rest to a tired hunter is of the utmost importance; humanity demands for him the most scrupulous attention, and interest goes hand in hand. Horses can come out again so much sooner, if they are carefully managed in this respect, than if they are disturbed till a late hour in the evening, and uselessly harassed on the following day.

Knowing the injurious effects which are produced by long railway journeys on the day of hunting, if I were to hunt from London, I should adopt one of the two following plans: I would either keep my horses in the country, or confine myself to hunting within five-and-thirty miles of town, so that I might generally have my horse in his own stable by six o'clock. There is, however, an objection to this, for there is very little good country within that distance. Duly considering all things, I should certainly prefer keeping my horses in the country; for although the difficulties which my kind correspondent enumerates would have great weight, still there are many things which, being balanced against each other, must award the preference to that arrangement. I am rather at a loss to know how a horse can be got into hunting condition in London, where there are none but hard roads to exercise upon. I should

much prefer the country within reach of Bletchley, Wolverton, Blisworth, or Weedon, on the London and Birmingham line, to that of Berkhampstead or Tring. If I selected the Great Western line as a means of communication with sylvan pastimes, I should choose the vicinity of Didcot, Steventon, Farringdon, Shrivenham, Swindon, or even as far as Chippenham, to that around Slough, Twyford, or Reading. To indulge in those favouritisms, it would scarcely ever be possible to regain the London terminus before 8. 30. P. M., an hour sadly too late to be accompanied by a hunter, if his condition is regarded with ordinary attention. I can quite enter into the difficulty of finding an efficient servant to take charge of two or three hunters uncontrolled by his master's daily inspection. Two horses are quite as much as a man can do justice to, having to go to covert twice or thrice in the week. In a general way, a man who keeps a couple of hunters experiences more difficulty in meeting with a good servant to perform the duty of taking charge of them than he does in filling any other vocation in which domestic servants are employed. A person who keeps a large stud necessarily employs an efficient groom, who has authority over the helpers, and ought to have sufficient experience in the treatment of hunters on their return from the chase to be able to adopt all ordinary remedies in the event of

casual accidents. Such men are not very numerous: when they are met with they require high wages: and, moreover, they do not like to work single-handed, in which they are correct; for a hunter cannot be dressed, when he returns from the field, with the requisite expedition, unless two men, or a man and boy, be employed. In small establishments the assistance of a gardener or other odd man may be called in with advantage.

Gentlemen who hunt from London must, in my humble opinion, find it most convenient and economical to keep their horses in the country, for their horses will certainly come out oftener than when harassed by frequent journeys on the rail. Much, I am ready to admit, depends on the temper of the animal; but it is the great length of time he must be on his legs which appears to be an obstacle not to be overcome. A man experiences very little fatigue when travelling fifty or sixty miles in a first-class railway carriage: he may enjoy his repose all the way, if so inclined; and, by taking a suit of clothes to exchange for those in which he has been hunting — a very necessary precaution — he is perfectly comfortable. If he has had the good fortune to see a good day's sport, he may dream of it over again in the greatest luxury of enjoyment. On the point of economy, much is gained by keeping the horses down the line. The expense of taking a horse down and return-

ing from thirty to forty miles, including return-ticket, gruel, &c., will average from fifteen to twenty shillings; taking it at seventeen and six-pence twice a week, allowing an interval of three or four weeks' frost, it may be computed at thirty pounds for the season; half that sum given to an experienced trustworthy groom, as additional wages, would ensure the services of a man who may be depended upon. If two or more friends engage stabling in the country, and keep their horses together, one head groom will take charge of the whole establishment, and, with a number of helpers in proportion to the number of horses, the expenses will be again diminished. This plan has been adopted by some of my acquaintance, and it has worked quite satisfactorily. There are also several hunting livery-stables where horses are taken great care of, and where, for a stated sum, everything is provided, including a man to take them to covert. I refrain from enumerating any, because frequent changes must of necessity take place: those which were in the highest repute last season may be superseded by others; and it is very easy for any sportsman, after having selected the country he intends to hunt in, to make local inquiries for the most suitable accommodation.

There is another plan which I would suggest available to those who desire to hunt from London, providing they are not disposed to encumber them-

selves with studs of hunters. Any number of horses may be engaged either for the season, for a month, or even for a day, which obviates all anxiety. The purveyor undertakes to provide a certain number of horses for a stipulated sum, and to have one at the appointed place of meeting when required. He runs all risks of accidents, provides servants, and exonerates the hirer from all trouble, which, to those who have other engagements, is often of considerable importance. If it is practicable for a man to have his horses frequently under his own inspection, it is certainly more agreeable; but, as that is generally a subject of some difficulty to a gentleman who has engagements in London, the custom of hiring hunters may be adopted with success.

Lend me thine ear, courteous reader, if you are an inhabitant of the great metropolis, and I will whisper a secret to you, not to be imparted to your dearest friend. Peradventure, you would delight to take your pleasure with the merry harrier; to see the hare trailed up to her form, started and hunted through her intricate mazes; to compare the steady close working of the harrier with the dashing style of the fox-hound. Whither would you lead me? I think I hear you exclaim. To Brighton, to meet the far-famed harriers of that marine metropolis, or the Brookside? No; within five miles of Oxford Street, at the rural

village of Neasdon, you will find a most superior, well-appointed pack of harriers, admirably hunted by Mr. Hall; and although they do not advertise their appointments, they will be most courteously supplied to any gentleman who will leave his card with Mr. Hall. Within ten miles of the General Post Office, if you choose to go further afield, point your horse's head for Stratford, proceed through Snaresbrook to Woodford, in Essex, and there you will meet as complete a little pack as your most fastidious notions of rural pastime can devise. They hunt twice a-week—Tuesdays and Saturdays. As I am credibly informed, they are conducted on the most quiet and gentlemanly principles by Mr. Henry Vigne; and, as there are hares to be found in the forest, good sport is generally obtained with them. Should the chase lead you further from town than the place at which you commenced hunting, or should your horse be tired, the Eastern Counties Railway will enable you to return to London.

CHAP. XIII.

Scent.—Its Elucidation.—Concerns Sportsmen of all Kinds.—Scent considered.—Influence of the Atmosphere.—Evaporation.—Somervile's Remark.—Soil in connection with Evaporation.—Tobacco Smoke.—Steam.—Frosty Atmosphere.—Evaporation, where most active.—Comparative Effects of the Air.—Bad Scent on Roads.—Scent on dry Fallows.—Earl Fitzhardinge's Cheltenham and Berkeley Countries.—The Albrighton Country.—Draining excessive Wet Land.—Beckford's Opinion confuted.—A Wet Season.—Effect of Water on Scent.—Smoking from a Hookah.—Hounds running on flooded Lands.—Scent is held in Suspension.—Absorption detrimental to Scent.—Inference.—Side Scent.—Effect of Leaves.—Foxes emit various Degrees of Scent.—Somervile's Opinion on the Escape of Scent.—Difference of Scent from various Animals exemplified.—Somervile on a similar Point.—How Scent is influenced when a Fox is found.—Plants and Shrubs.—Foot People.—Effect of the Wind.—A Rule of Beckford's confuted.—Foxes make their own Points, regardless of the Wind.—Argument.—Corollary.—Scent depends greatly on Equality of Temperature.—A Review of Seasons.—The wet Season of 1852.—Coincidence.—Over-riding Hounds.—Hard Riders in Olden Times.—An Explanation.—Sport affected by large Fields.—Custom at Gorse Coverts.—A Rush for a Start.—Cause of Foxes being frequently lost.—Example in Woodland.—A Case in Point with the Atherstone Hounds; and a Run lost in consequence of unfair Riding.—Different Management necessary in Populous Countries to that in Provincial.—An Elucidation.—Skirting Riders.—Recovering a lost Scent with a small Field.—The same with a large one.—A Huntsman's Difficulties.—Con-

trasted Indifference of many Hard Riders.—Their own Loss. —Happy Delusion.—Mistaken Opinions concerning Huntsmen. — A Club proposed for Aged and Disabled Huntsmen and Whipper-ins.—Arguments urged in favour of such a Club.

THERE are few subjects of greater interest to the sportsman, or which occasion more frequent inquiries whether it is likely to prove good or bad, than scent; but this is not remarkable, inasmuch as the success of the day is subservient to its condition. The difficult question cannot be elucidated till the wonderful faculty of the hound solves the mystery. It concerns all classes: fox-hunters, hare-hunters, stag-hunters, and those who, with their pointers and double barrels, range the fields in pursuit of the feathered denizens of stubbles and turnips. Although the practised *savant* evades an absolute reply with caution, still will he endeavour indirectly to draw forth an opinion, his day's enjoyment being so immediately connected with the phenomenon.

There are many causes which have a tendency to affect the scent. The atmosphere is universally admitted as the principal agent; but we must go further into the inquiry, and examine to what extent and under what circumstances the atmosphere affects the evaporative and absorbent properties of the earth; and although it is impossible to control the elements, some conclusions may be

drawn, how under certain circumstances a day's sport is most likely to be obtained.

Somervile, with his wonted talent, makes a few remarks on the subject, and comes to this conclusion:

"Thus on the air
Depend the hunter's hopes."

This must not, however, be taken in an abstract sense; which I will endeavour to demonstrate by pointing out how the atmosphere in connection with other causes affects "the hunter's hopes."

The nature of the soil, in combination with the state of the atmosphere, is a means whereby the scent is influenced, for it is the effect produced under those circumstances occasioning evaporation or absorption which to a great degree regulates the amount of scent. Acting differently on arable and grass lands, variations are recognised; and extending this principle to the vales and the hills, similar properties are brought into action. When the evaporation from the earth is in a very active state, there is seldom, if ever, any scent; this is obvious, because the evaporation dispels the particles of scent as they ascend, above the line where the hound can wind them; and it follows evidently that on such days the most favourable places for hunting are those which are the least susceptible of the influences. It often happens, when riding to covert, that a countryman is

passing along the road smoking his pipe, and I have invariably remarked that if I could wind "the baccy" pretty strongly, there has been a good scent, and the reverse if it is scarcely perceptible. This last incident is conclusive proof that the aroma ascends to a moderate height through the medium of the atmosphere. The steam from a railway engine affords also a strong indication. That will sometimes be seen to rise perpendicularly, at other times it floats, as it were, in the air, and occasionally it descends immediately, apparently traversing the earth in a dense cloud. In both the first and the last cases there is scarcely any scent; but in the second case it may be recognised as a favourable criterion. A frosty air has a powerful effect on scent, during which, in shaded situations, it will frequently be good, whereas in those situations where the sun has power there will be none at all. Evaporation is more active on arable land than on grass, and every tyro knows which holds the best scent. On arable land in the highest state of cultivation, or rather pulverisation, evaporation is more extensive than on soils of a retentive nature, and from that cause heavy clays are more favourable than the light loamy and sandy districts. Land which has been recently ploughed is also more subservient to evaporative influences than that which has remained dormant for some time. The general con-

dition of the atmosphere may be nearly similar over a considerable tract of country, while the principles of evaporation may vary in certain localities, from the reasons already suggested. And this is not unusual, because we know that it often rains at one place, while it is quite fine at another.

Scent generally fails on roads; but that is not an invariable rule, for sometimes it will be better there than in some other places; foxes, however, do not usually frequent such lines, except for short intervals. It will sometimes happen that there is an excellent scent on dry fallows, even when the dust is flying; which most sportsmen will acknowledge who have hunted with Earl Fitzhardinge's hounds in their Cheltenham country, during the spring of the year. When the scent is good there, it is seldom so in the Berkeley Vale, and *vice versâ*. The latter is all grass; the former, especially on the Cotswold Hills, is principally arable. On the light sandy soils in the Albrighton country, I never saw or heard of there being a good scent in dry weather. The nature of that land is essentially different from that on the Cotswold Hills. Arable land which has been drained is not generally favourable to fox-hunting, and, as I apprehend, it is more readily acted upon by the elements in the quantity of evaporation given forth. It is a generally

received opinion that when the country is overcharged with moisture, the scent will not lie. Beckford entertained that notion, although I must observe that many of his remarks on this point, whatever might have been the events which occasioned them in his time, are overruled by modern instances. He says, "Scent scarcely ever lies well with a north or an east wind; a southerly wind without rain, and a westerly wind that is not rough, are the most favourable." A poet who gave an excellent description of one of the best runs ever seen in Leicestershire, commences his narrative, "With the wind at north-east, most forbiddingly keen;" and subsequent experience attests the truth of his effusion, for it generally happens that the best-scenting days are those when the wind has something of the east in its course.

When the earth is perfectly saturated with rain, scent has been known to lie well. Of this I may introduce as an example the season of 1852 and 1853; nevertheless I do not take it to be a general consequence; but this adds confirmation to the opinion that it is the evaporation which regulates the amount of scent, while the force of evaporation is produced by the condition of the air.

It may be observed that pure water, although it weakens a scent in passing through it, does not

absolutely destroy it. This may be determined by smoking tobacco through a hookah, which renders the nicotian weed milder, but does not annihilate the perfume. I have seen hounds carry a scent where the land has been flooded three inches deep, or more. It is not a common case, because foxes do not often put it to the test by selecting such ground; never, in fact, unless it intervenes between them and some favourite point. From this it is evident that the scent exudes from the body of the animal, and is held for a certain time suspended in the atmosphere. It is also quite clear in those cases, that very little evaporation from the earth is taking place. Under some circumstances the earth absorbs moisture from the air; that is when the land is dry and the air dense, moist and heavy, in which condition, I believe, the scent cannot be good. We must, therefore, come to this conclusion, that when the evaporation is very great, or, on the other hand, the absorption of moisture by the earth is extensive, the scent will be affected in the ratio of either principle prevailing. In heathy districts, although the land is generally of a light sandy nature, the scent is usually good, most probably because the foxes touching the heath leave particles of their perfume on the sprays. The same cause exists in coverts where there is much foggy grass; but just after the

leaves have fallen in woodlands, the scent generally fails, as I take it, in consequence of the leaves checking the process of evaporation. Some persons attribute this to the wind blowing the leaves about, and consequently shifting them; but how can that be the case where there is little or no wind stirring?

There is no doubt a great distinction in the degrees of scent emitted by different foxes, and also by the same foxes under certain influences and various circumstances. The bodily health of the animal will occasion this. When the fox is in a state of exhaustion, or, as the term is known to sportsmen, when he is sinking, the scent usually fails. The same is observable with vixens when heavy in cub, at which time I apprehend the quality, if not also the quantity of scent, is altered. The pace at which foxes are moving, I make no doubt, affects the scent materially; for when they are just creeping along, as they often do, in covert out of sight, hounds will sometimes actually run over them.

Somervile notices what I conceive to be one of the elements by which a good or bad scent is regulated—namely, evaporation, but takes no notice of absorption; he expresses himself very eloquently on the manner in which the scent is emitted from the fox, and as I cannot find language equally appropriate, I shall quote his words:—

"The blood that from the heart incessant rolls
In many a crimson tide, then here and there
In smaller rills disparted, as it flows
Propelled, the serous particles evade
Thro' th' open pores, and with the ambient air
Entangling mix. As fuming vapours rise,
And hang upon the gently purling brook,
There by th' incumbent atmosphere compress'd,
The panting chase grows warmer as he flies,
And through the network of the skin perspires;
Leaves a long-streaming trail behind, which by
The cooler air condens'd, remains, unless
By some rude storm dispers'd, or rarefied
By the meridian sun's intenser heat.
To every shrub the warm effluvia cling,
Hang on the grass, impregnate earth and skies."

That every animal, although of the same species, emits a different scent under various circumstances, there cannot exist a doubt; otherwise, the blood-hound could not hunt the deer which he is first encouraged to pursue through herds of the same kind. Blood-hounds which have been taught to trace the human species, are unerring in their object; and applying this property more diffusely, I need only observe that common curs, if sagacious, can distinguish the course their masters have taken, even through crowded cities. Here we find an additional authority in Somerville, who describes the method adopted on the borders of England and Scotland in olden times of tracing the prowling caitiffs who made free

with other people's flocks and herds. The blood-hound having been led to the spot where the depredation was committed, he continues: —

"His busy nose the steaming vapour snuffs
Inquisitive, nor leaves one turf untried,
Till, conscious of the recent stains, his heart
Beats quick; his snuffling nose, his active tail,
Attest his joy; then with deep op'ning mouth,
That makes the welkin tremble, he proclaims
Th' audacious felon; foot by foot he marks
His winding way, while all the list'ning crowd
Applaud his reas'nings. O'er the wat'ry ford,
Dry sandy heaths, and stony barren hills,
O'er beaten paths, with men and beasts distain'd,
Unerring he pursues; till at the cot
Arrived, and seizing by his guilty throat
The caitiff vile, redeems the captive prey:
So exquisitely delicate his sense!"

There are also circumstances connected with finding which will have some influence over the scent. If a fox steals away from covert, and has time to jog leisurely along, the scent is generally weak; but if he waits to be found and takes two or three turns round the covert just to circulate his blood before "he breaks away," it is much more in favour of a run. There are many herbs and shrubs which are inimical to scent, especially the wild garlic, spearmint, and other strong-smelling plants. Laurel, I am confident, produces the same effect; for I never saw hounds run into

pleasure-grounds about gentlemen's houses where the ordinary evergreens are cultivated, that the scent did not fail. The foil of foot-people is more injurious than is generally supposed, and much more so than that of horses, cattle, or sheep. The line of country which a fox selects with reference to the point from whence the wind blows, has a decided effect on the scent. If he runs up-wind as every sportsman is aware, the hounds are generally enabled to follow him at a killing pace; the same favourable result usually attends a side-wind; but if the fox runs down-wind, unless the state of the atmosphere is propitious, the ability of the hounds to follow will be diminished. It is quite clear, however, that a fox emits just the same amount of scent in either case, but the power to catch that scent is materially influenced by the wind. Beckford says, "If a fox should run up the wind when first found, and afterwards turn, he will seldom, if ever, turn again." But this is not the fact, or perhaps, foxes have changed their propensities since that gentleman came to this conclusion. Some foxes will endeavour to make their points whether up-wind or down. In the event of their being hard-pressed when running up-wind, they will very probably turn from distress, and finding the hounds not pursuing them with equal vigour, they will often continue the latter course for some distance, and very often

recovering their strength, will again endeavour to make their first point. There is no rule under such circumstances.

When we fairly consider all the events by which scent is effected, it cannot be a matter of surprise that it should vary so materially. It is possible that they may all combine to render it good or bad, or partially so, as certain influences prevail. The density of the atmosphere may be ascertained by consulting the barometer; that being on the ascendant, is a favourable indication; when falling, the reverse; but then we are unable to foresee to what extent it may affect the evaporation or absorption on particular descriptions of land. Moreover, we cannot tell what line of country a fox may think fit to select, whether his course will be up-wind or down, or whether he be one of those animals which carry a strong perfume about them. Equality of temperature is an event which very materially affects the scent; if the weather throughout the hunting season be invariably changing, first-rate sport cannot be obtained. By some old memorandums I find the season of 1830 and 1831 was very wet, and afforded an average amount of sport; the succeeding one was rough in the extreme, much rain fell at the commencement, followed by snow, which continued till late in the spring; the sport of that winter was wretched. In the year of 1833 and

1834, it was remarkably mild and open, with little frost till February and March, and from the succession of rains it was a severe time for the horses. The following winter was very changeable; it was dry at the beginning, sharp frosts set in about Christmas; and we had much sleet, snow, and rain in March. Sport was uncertain, some packs had their share, others, none at all. In 1835 and 1836 the scent was good till Christmas, at which time we had frost and snow with variable temperature till March, when it was dry and dusty, and scent very changeable. My memorandums from that date till 1840 being deficient, I cannot fill up the interval from memory, but I find that season was generally fair, and more than an average of sport resulted till after Christmas, when the weather became very changeable, and sport followed suit. The following year was somewhat similar. The year 1843 was ushered in with a remarkably fine warm and bright day, and the weather subsequently became very uncertain, sometimes frosty, at others warm, and I shall never forget the heat for the time of year on the 20th of March, when Lord Gifford's hounds found a fox in Hayley Wood and killed him in Oakley Wood, with a very bad scent; it was the heat that enabled the hounds to taste their fox. The scent was very uncertain during this spring. Subsequent seasons do not afford particular instances

till that of 1845–6, which may be characterised as a dry one. There was very little frost; and hounds in general had more than an average of runs. The year 1849–50 was a bad season generally; there was a considerable quantity of frost. It is a general opinion, if the scent has not been good, and a frost commences, that it will improve afterwards; but I do not find that the opinion is borne out by facts. The year following was exceedingly good, while that of 1851–2, although the weather was very open, and apparently favourable for hunting, was decidedly the worst-scenting season I can bear in remembrance — a complaint made by almost every master of hounds in the kingdom. To make amends for that, the last winter was perhaps the best ever known. It is fairly entitled to the superlative degree for its excellence, as the preceding one was for its deficiency. Rain fell early in October, and continued to inundate the country to an unprecedented degree. The opinion that an excessive quantity of wet is unfavourable to scent was completely confuted by the results of the season 1852–3. Never was the land more completely saturated, or the sport throughout the kingdom more generally good.

A singular fact connected with this season is worthy of notice. Although an abundance of sport had been shown, far exceeding the average,

with nearly every pack of fox-hounds throughout the kingdom, and every country had been unusually deep and severe for horses, besides that the assemblages of sportsmen at the covert-side had exceeded those of any preceding year, yet accidents to men or horses were very rare. Doubtless there were some fatal to the equine race which have not gained publicity; but I believe none of serious consequence happened to their riders. To what cause or causes this good fortune may be attributed, I am not prepared to state; probably to a combination of causes. Mother Earth was never in a more tender mood to receive into her affectionate embraces her numerous family of venatic sons ambitiously wooing the fates in the enterprising vicissitudes of the chase. The accomplishment of riding is more generally practised and understood; for it usually happens that the most unsophisticated "muffs" are the most likely to meet with accidents.

There is another circumstance which, although not exactly connected with scent, is very intimately connected with the sport, which is riding to hounds. In the early days of fox-hunting — that is in the time of Meynell and Corbet—hard-riding, jealous men were not numerous, since which they have increased to an extraordinary degree. How many foxes have escaped, how many good runs have been lost from this cause

alone! I do not insert these remarks with a view to suppress that general ardour and enthusiasm which assist in making fox-hunting the noblest and most distinguished of our national amusements; quite the reverse. My motive is to offer such hints to the uninitiated that they may be able to gain enviable distinction, which they cannot do if they destroy that sport which is the means of affording opportunities of accomplishing the object of their ambition. In the fashionable and populous countries, where two hundred or more assemble at the place of meeting, with the utmost caution, such numbers cannot fail in some cases to impede the operations of hounds and huntsmen. Where the coverts are extensive, persons riding about in all directions occasion much mischief; when gorse coverts are being drawn, the field is usually collected to one point; but then when the fox breaks away, what a rush for a start! This is a critical moment; before the hounds have settled to the scent, they are invariably pressed upon, which, added to their natural excitement, will render the steadiest pack hasty. Hundreds of foxes are lost by this incautious proceeding. But let us take another case; when the fox is found in a large woodland, he attempts to break covert, and is headed back; if, however, he does go away, and hounds are doing their work to perfection, ambitious horsemen press cruelly upon

them; and when the fox makes the least deviation from the line, the hounds are driven off the scent. So few men observe, as they ought to do, the difference between hounds running with and without a scent; in other words, how far they bring it. I remember a circumstance with the Atherstone hounds some years since, which impressed me very strongly with the difficulties a huntsman has to contend against where there is a very large attendance of sportsmen. They drew the gorse at Combe, which was so thick in the bottom that, although there was a fox in it, they could not induce him to break covert, and the hounds were taken away to find another, when the fox left his quarters, and was viewed away. The hounds were hallooed back, and, being laid on the scent, ran him towards the railway, where the embankment being high, the horsemen made for the arches, and, as it happened, there were two at a distance less than a mile apart. This caused many to speculate; some went to the right and others to the left; whilst a portion of the field kept with the hounds, which were pointing about midway between the arches, till they arrived close to the railway, when they turned to the right on land already foiled by the horses; and moreover, seeing so many a-head, they (the hounds) kept on without ever speaking to the scent some distance. On arriving at the arch, concluding

the fox had gone through, Thurlow made his cast under it, but could not hit the scent. The fact was, the fox, on coming to the railroad, turned and ran parallel with it as already mentioned; but as the hounds had not been actually hunting him for nearly half a mile, it was impossible to say exactly at what point they had left the scent. Under such circumstances, there was nothing to guide the huntsman in his cast; his only alternative was to hold his hounds forward, still bearing to the right, when at length he hit upon his fox again; but so much time had been lost that the scent failed considerably, and a brilliant burst was lost. After much slow hunting, the hounds got up to their fox, and killed him; yet the beauty of the day's sport was destroyed by those ambitious, speculating gentlemen, who, not content with riding fairly to the hounds, by skirting got before them in a most provoking manner. A skirting horseman is as bad as a skirting hound, and both ought to be drafted. I could mention many other instances of a similar character, although none more decided; and this is quite sufficient to point out the mischief occasioned by such inconsiderate and reckless riding.

A sportsman accustomed to a provincial country, where hounds enjoy plenty of room to do their work unmolested by a crowd of horsemen, is surprised, when he visits a populous hunt, to see

the huntsman, the moment the hounds come to a check, make a wide cast, and that without giving the hounds time to make theirs according to the orthodox rule of hunting; and perchance our provincial friend condemns the huntsman's practice; but, on reflection, it will often be found to be the only alternative. To render this intelligible, let us suppose a fox found in a gorse covert, with two or three hundred ardent spirits jealous of distinction. The fox "breaks away," and the hounds leave the covert in a body; but before they can well settle to the scent they are pressed upon; however, in a few minutes, they get to work, and are scoring along at a merry pace. Many are riding the line, others are skirting; that is, riding to a point which they conceive the fox will make for. After running some distance the fox turns, either from being blown or from being headed—perchance to make good his point; at all events, the hounds come to a check; in all probability they have over-run the scent, and have been driven still further beyond it by the horsemen; if the huntsman is in his place and attentive to what is passing, he will detect the *contretemps*, and make his cast accordingly, but it must be a wide and speculative one. In the event of a check, provided there are not more than some twenty horsemen, the most judicious plan is to leave the hounds to themselves:

if they have room to work, they will make their own cast; and if they have over-run the scent, which probably they may have done, they know how far they brought it; they will return to the spot, and in all probability recover it; they have time to feel for it, and their instinct guides them. But if the aforesaid number of horsemen be multiplied by ten, it is quite another affair. A fox will seldom turn back in the face of such a phalanx; if he does it in an open country, he is nearly certain to be viewed; but he may have been headed back before the field had arrived at the particular spot, and still endeavour to make good his original point; under such circumstances the scent has been ridden over, for the field is dispersed and it is very likely the flanks both right and left extend a quarter of a mile—often wider—from the line the hounds have been running. There is no alternative in such cases but to make a cast at once beyond where the ground has been foiled by the horses; and, therefore, it must be wide. To attempt to pick through them would be a hopeless endeavour. The operations of huntsmen who have large fields to contend against are obviously more perplexing than of those who hunt hounds in provincial countries, where there are but a few horsemen out, and most if not all of them sportsmen.

There are many hard riding men who affect to

know nothing about hounds or hunting, who regard hounds simply as objects to ride after; in short, they think it derogatory to be supposed to understand any of the details. All I can say of them is, that I think they lose a vast deal of the interest which is to be derived from the chase—peradventure some of them are better versed in the mysteries of woodcraft than they profess to be. There are also a vast number of persons who follow hounds, who certainly possess very superficial ideas of the incidents which are most intimately connected with hunting, and yet they often indulge themselves in the happy delusion that they are perfect masters of the art. If they were to attempt the most trifling performance they would speedily proclaim their inefficiency. Unfortunately, though, they are the most prone to express opinions which are neither founded on experience or reality. It very frequently happens that, when hounds fail to show sport, every reason but the correct one is raised against the unlucky master and the huntsman. Some will exclaim that the huntsman is too slow, others that he is too fast; others will argue that the hounds are too high bred, or too lusty, or too light, or too small for the country, or too big; when it most cases the only obstacle is want of scent, a phenomenon which human nature cannot control.

It is too commonly a custom to express opinions

respecting huntsmen; but it is a subject which ought to be delicately treated. Their bread is dependent upon their characters and proficiencies, and it is an unmanly act to injure the reputation of another from opinions which, after all, may be erroneous. If a huntsman misconducts himself, he is clearly open to censure; but a remark made touching a man's ability to show sport is quite another affair; there may be reasons which superficial observers cannot be acquainted with: at the same time there is no reason why a huntsman or any other person should forget propriety of conduct. This, however, very rarely applies; in fact, I know of only one man of the present day to whom such blame can be attached, and of him all I know is from report; yet if the reports be true,—which, however, I do not doubt,—he certainly ought not to be brought into the field. Uncourteous behaviour is reprehensible in all classes, in none more than in a huntsman. Taking them as a body, they are entitled to our best consideration; they work hard in their calling; they are exposed to many risks and to the vicissitudes of the weather, to afford sport for those who can choose to encounter similar inconveniences. It appears to be a matter of surprise that a fund or club has never been instituted for the assistance or support of well-conducted, deserving huntsmen and whippers-in, upon a similar

principle with the Bentinck Testimonial Fund. It is true that when a servant has been any length of time in the employment of a nobleman or gentleman of wealth, he sometimes receives a pension from his master, when age and infirmities render him incapable of continuing the performance of his duties; but there are many very deserving men who are not so well provided for. It might be urged, further, that the establishment of such a fund would operate in deterring noblemen and gentlemen, masters of hounds, from exercising their liberality in behalf of their own servants; but if such an argument were held good, it would apply more especially with regard to jockeys. There are very few of respectability or eminence who have not served wealthy patrons, for whom they have won large sums of money, and yet in their old age jockeys have been sometimes left with scanty means of existence.

To promote so good a purpose, surely every sportsman, every man who enters the field to participate in the thrilling pleasures of the chase, would be anxious to contribute, and secure for those men who so frequently risk their lives and limbs in the service of fox-hunting a comfortable annuity, when age, accidents, or infirmities render them incapable of "active service." Englishmen are bountiful to excess in many things, especially when a combination of good intentions can be

displayed, and the subject is taken up by persons of influence and energy. It is the beginning that imposes the difficulty; that overcome, there can be no doubt that the fund would flourish most extensively.

CHAP. XIV.

England, the Land of Sporting.—Freemasonry incident to the Chase.—Arguments in favour of Hunting.—Inducements to preserve Foxes.—The Farmer's Recompense.—Civilisation and Sociality.—Unfounded Expectations.—Popularity of the Chase.—Hostility to manly Pursuits.—Inconvenience of ancient Practices.—Hunting at Daybreak.—Allusion to Somervile and Beckford.—Prediction concerning Steeple-chasing not realised.—Cause of the Failure of Steeple-chasing.—Hunting not subservient to similar Causes.—Steeple-chase Horses not often good Hunters.—Superior Horsemanship promoted.—Impropriety of pressing on Hounds.—Comparison of Riders to Hounds.—On Falls.—The Doctrine of Falls.—The Art of Falling.—Distinctions.—Falls are not Indications of bad Riding.—A Falling Genius.—The Fortunes of War.—Timber and Blind Ditches.—Horses getting away from their Riders.—An Event in Warwickshire.—Anecdote of a Coachman.—Getting into Ditches.—Getting out of Ditches.—Dress.—Brown Top-Boots.—Tops of all Hues.—Observances of Dress in former Days compared with the present Times.—On the Cut of a Coat.—Old-fashioned Leathers.—Old-fashioned Boots.—Black Boots.—Changes in Fashions.—Dress Coat in the Field.—Inconsistencies.—Insignia of suspected Insanity.—Free Trade and Freedom of Dress.—Reform in Dress.—Re-establishment of Leathers.—Propriety of Hunting-Costume.—Mr. Delme Radcliffe's Opinion.—A correct Coat.—Hunting-Caps versus Hats.—Saddles of Olden Days.—Bad Saddles.—Good Saddles.—Appendages to Saddles.—Drinking-Flasks.—Canteens.—Cigar-Boxes.—Country Saddlers.—London Saddlers.

No kingdom enjoys the same opportunities of participating in field sports as merry England; neither is there any other nation where the same social intercourse sheds its genial influence through all classes. There is a freemasonry which binds all who engage in the delightful excitements of the chase, with ties paramount to those of any other amusement. It produces acquaintance, promotes friendship, and affords a topic of highly interesting conversation. While it establishes health, it inures the rising generation to activity and disregard for danger. The inducements to enjoy a country life are possibly in some measure diminished by the facility for travelling afforded by the railways, but still fox-hunting has a good tendency in that respect. Landlords are brought into communication with their tenants to the manifest advantage of the latter, among whom considerable sums of money are circulated through various channels connected with the chase. If the landed proprietor were to be deprived of his rural amusements and attraction to his country seat, he would naturally seek his pastime elsewhere. By the union of interests every thing that is agreeable, satisfactory, and profitable is produced. Hunting, of all other amusements, maintains and is maintained by that union. One country gentleman may be fond of shooting; he may not hunt, but yet he preserves the foxes for those who do; and

he gains by that act of courtesy a vast deal more social pleasure, and the interchanges of friendship produce for him infinitely greater satisfaction, than a few brace of pheasants could afford. If a farmer feels annoyed at seeing his fields ridden over, he remembers the fact that horses and servants are maintained upon the produce of his land, and therefore its value is considerably enhanced. The progress of civilisation has exercised a decided influence on the affairs of woodcraft, in an equal ratio with other pursuits, and thus many changes have been introduced. Is this to be regarded as an evil omen? I think quite the reverse. If the social manners and habits of Englishmen had alone advanced in refinement, and the customs connected with field sports had remained stationary, a chasm would have been opened which would not readily be closed. Had such been the case, it would be incompatible for a man of cultivated mind and modern education to enter into those amusements. If the spirits were not congenial, the enjoyment would be curtailed. Instead of the union which is promoted by fox-hunting, there would have been a division in society.

The auguries of a few prejudiced persons predicted that the changes which have taken place would occasion the downfall of British sports, and with it the distinction of the British character, — auguries which happily have not

been realised, neither is there any cause for apprehension. At no period did the chase ever stand so highly in popular estimation as at present. There may be some individuals who would exult if all manly enjoyments were exterminated, and perhaps others who are envious of every thing that undergoes a change — much more so if it is an improvement on ancient customs — who have for several years uttered grave warnings that fox-hunting was hastening to destruction. Comparing the customs of past and present days, which have been enumerated in these pages, such a construction is quite at variance with facts. The irregularity which presided over the arrangements for hunting certain districts must have entailed considerable inconvenience and annoyance, literally excluding many from participating in the sport during a great part of the season, unless they moved with the hounds from place to place, — an event entailing great expense. The early hour for the commencement of operations, — daybreak, although perfectly congenial with the social customs of our grandfathers, who were wont to dine at one, would be tantamount to exclusion when consulting the popular taste and habits of the present period. Intent upon the destruction of the vulpine race as our forefathers were, — for neither Beckford nor Somervile utter a syllable about the

preservation of foxes, an early hour was in some respects desirable. The poet says, —

> "For these nocturnal thieves, huntsman, prepare
> Thy sharpest vengeance. Oh! how glorious 'tis
> To right th' oppress'd, and bring the felon vile
> To just disgrace! Ere yet the morning peep,
> Or stars retire from the first blush of day,
> With thy far echoing voice alarm thy pack,
> And rouse thy bold compeers."

There were many of the most zealous advocates and steady supporters of the chase, who recognised in steeple-chasing an attraction which would seduce the rising generation from the legitimate amusement of their forefathers; nor were those apprehensions altogether groundless. When at its zenith, it probably had that effect to a certain extent; but the ill-savoured proceedings which have pervaded a host of speculators, engaged in questionable performances, have driven modern sportsmen, possessed of either wealth or reputation, away from the arena. As an inducement to enlist under the banner of steeple-chasing distinction, betting was a powerful auxiliary, and on that rock the argosy has split. Happily the hunting field has never been made the nucleus for betting transactions; if that ever were to be the case, it would quickly fall from its high estate.

The partisans of steeple-chasing, — and at one

period they were numerous,—urged that it would prove beneficial to hunting, by reason of the encouragement it offered to persons to breed a description of horses particularly adapted to the field. That, however, has turned out to be quite a mistaken notion, for nine-tenths of the steeple-chase horses are worthless as hunters. But without enrolling myself among the admirers of steeple-chasing, I fancy that some advantages may have arisen from it by the example of good horsemanship. It must be acknowledged that the style of riding of the present day is far superior to that of 1825. Many of my readers will probably express astonishment at this remark, and exclaim that the taste for steeple-chasing causes men to over-ride hounds, and occasions a vast deal of mischief. Yet here let me observe, that a man may be a very superior horseman, and yet have that self-control not to press unfairly upon hounds. I have often noticed men who have no pretensions as horsemen creating the greatest confusion; and perhaps some notion of their own incompetency added to a little rivalry, or jealousy, or some equally insufficient cause, is the ostensible motive. Following a huntsman when he is making his cast, is a pretty certain indication that the moment the hounds get upon the scent it is the intention of the person who perpetrates so unsportsmanlike an act to set off and ride before

they are steadily settled to their work. A good horseman, having confidence in his ability to secure a good place, will not be so over anxious. Where there was one good horseman thirty years ago, there are twenty now. In those days there were but few who had the slightest idea of holding their horses together, of selecting the soundest and best ground to ride over, or of looking forward for the most practicable part of the fence; but with a loose rein, sitting on the horse's back like a sack of grain, you would see the greater portion of those who followed hounds pounding away, as long as the hounds kept on and their horses had the ability to go. There were a few who rode well, and some of them are still going; but the numbers are limited, in comparison with the younger men. To maintain a good place with hounds with the least number of falls is more the order of the day than it was wont to be. Tumbling over fences is not altogether a desirable method of crossing a country; at any rate, it is more amusing to the spectators than the performers; but when it is performed, it should be done artistically, for there is much art in falling, in order to avoid accidents and loss of time.

But it must not be inferred that any man shall ride to hounds without having falls; such a doctrine would be absurd; indeed, if security could be effected against such risks, one half of the

charms of hunting would be exterminated. The glorious uncertainty which is attendant upon the chase as well as racing constitutes the excitement, the essence of pleasure.

Coming to the conclusion that falls are inevitable, it is a consideration how a man may fall most advantageously. Peradventure some gentlemen would be ambitious to fall gracefully, an accomplishment not readily to be acquired; others may be content if they can acquire the habit of falling safely, no doubt the most desirable; and in this there is as much difference in men, as there is in their style of riding. Coolness and activity are qualifications with which all are not endowed alike, and on those enviable exertions the safety of a "falling hero" is greatly dependent. When a purl is inevitable, the great object is to get clear of the horse as quickly as possible, in order to avoid his rolling over his rider: some men will spin out of the way with wonderful alacrity, get on their legs, catch their horses as they (the horses) are in the act of rising, remount and start again as if nothing had happened; while others come down to the ground "a burster," and lie there as if they were killed, yet in all probability they are not much hurt. Falls are no disparagement to men's abilities as horsemen unless they be of a certain class, who are readily distinguished by their awkwardness, and even they

can sometimes turn their misadventure to account in the estimation of their lady loves when they meet them "on parade" at Cheltenham or Leamington. I remember a genius of this kind falling over a single rail about two feet high, and riding about afterwards inquiring of every person with whom he had the slightest speaking acquaintance, if they had seen him "get his fall," anxious to impress every one with the fact. Having accomplished that purpose, he rode off to Cheltenham with a similar intention, although he lived five or six miles from that place. Some people make themselves strangely ridiculous. With men possessing any pretensions to the character of horsemen, falls are regarded as indicating a sportsmanlike determination to ride to hounds at all risks; and falls are the fortune of war.

The general opinion is opposed to strong timber as being the most prolific of danger, especially with a horse that is blown. I doubt whether blind ditches are not more objectionable. A horse that is accustomed to carpentry knows pretty well that it will not yield, and will make every effort to rise, whereas more carelessness is frequently evinced at squire traps.

Unless a man is quick in getting up after a fall, it is obvious that it would be better to have gone a short distance out of the line for a more practicable place. When a horse gets away from his

rider in a run, it may happen that they do not enter into partnership again till the fun is over; and it is not a dignified position, or an enviable condition for an ardent gentleman sportsman to be seen making his way across the fields in top boots, entreating every person who passes him to catch his horse. A friend of mine some years ago, on making his debut in Warwickshire, on which occasion the hounds had a very severe run, had the misfortune to lose his horse very early in the day in those large fields near Woolford Wood. The hounds went straight away and the horse after them, and my friend not knowing anything of the country, succeeded in reaching Halford Bridge, where he procured a conveyance to take him to Leamington, leaving his horse to his fate. That however was fortuitous; as a gentleman residing in the country, kindly had him taken to his stable, and properly attended to, till his owner, hearing where he was, sent for him on the following day. The horse had kept up with the hounds throughout the run, and with the exception of having lost three shoes, was none the worse for his single-handed exploit.

In those jolly days when the road was in force, and sporting travellers enjoyed their journeys on the box-seat of the coaches, when an appointment to one which passed through a good country was a favour regarded as a little fortune,

an anecdote was wont to be related of a man who had been working over some middle ground, making an application to a London proprietor for a coach, and having exhausted all his rhetoric in self-commendation, concluded by saying, he had driven many years, and had never had his coach overturned. This, which he thought would be the greatest recommendation, afforded the coach proprietor, who wished for a favourable pretext, an opportunity of dismissing the applicant most peremptorily. "Then you won't do for us," said he, to the astonished knight of the ribbons; "our coaches are constantly being overturned, and a man who has never had any practice will never be able to set them on their wheels again."

If any aspiring young sportsman, having passed his novitiate in a country where the fences are light, priding himself on the paucity of falls he may have experienced, should visit Northamptonshire, or any of the other strongly fenced countries, he will find himself precisely in the same dilemma as the disappointed coachman; for although he may not have to set a coach upon her wheels, he may have to set his horse upon his legs; in other words, to release him from a ditch, a process which is often easily accomplished by a means very simple, though not very generally resorted to. When a horse gets into a ditch upon his back, much difficulty is often experienced in extri-

cating him. Countrymen are sought for to assist, and sometimes, a team of horses is brought into requisition. By passing a stirrup leather through the stirrup iron so as to increase the length of that which is attached to the saddle, and procuring assistance to pull forward at them in such a direction, that the girths of the saddle will assist the animal's exertions, while another person endeavours to raise the horse's neck and shoulders, the animal may generally be extricated from his difficulty, without any other auxiliary, unless the ditch be very deep and inaccessible.

The changes which have taken place in the manners and customs of sportsmen have had a corresponding influence on dress, and it is rather singular that the costume of the present day is very similar to that of the commencement of the present century. How many of the old school have expostulated in dolorous cadence at the discontinuance of the brown-topped boot, declaring when that characteristic appointment went out of fashion, that the enthusiasm of fox-hunting had lost its vitality. They must be highly gratified now that the subject of their regret is reinstated in favour. It would be difficult to explain in what way the chase has at any period been influenced by the colour of a boot-top. At the present period the tint of the boot-top is so perfectly

subservient to the taste of the wearer, that no man shall be denounced as *outré*, let his choice of colour be what it may. Dark brown, approximating to black, with every shade between that and cream colour to pure white, have each their supporters. Other tops are seen absolutely blushing at the valet's eccentricity; while some turn blue at the confusion of shades by which they are surrounded. Peradventure it is argued that much attention to dress is incompatible with the *ardor venandi* which distinguishes the sportsman; that it divides the thoughts, in fact, from the ostensible object. But I would inquire were not our grandsires as punctilious in their costume as any "well got-up" gentleman of the present day? Were they not as proud of their quaint little pig-tails, as a "swell" of '53 is of his imperial, and there is as much consistency in one appendage as in the other? The long-waisted, long-skirted, loose-made, straight-cut single-breasted coat, with a black velvet cap, leather breeches, and brown-topped boots, were in vogue fifty years ago. There is very little difference in the present fashion; none, except that the skirts of the coat are shortened. They were certainly not cut with so much regard to becoming contour, but then they were generally porportioned by some rural professor. A journey to London was not an event to

be accomplished with very great facility, and country gentlemen were contented to patronise country tailors. Not that there are many of the metropolitan artistes of the present day, highly accomplished as they are in other articles of dress, who can turn out a well-made hunting-coat. They are so apt to fall into an extreme by making it either too precise or too slang-like in the cut; and of all things on earth a slang-looking red coat is the greatest abomination. I never could get a hunting-coat made so well by any other person as Gray of waterproof driving cape celebrity, though I may say I have seen some good ones turned out by Poole of Saville Row. The celebrated purveyor of leathers of olden times resided at Tarporley, in Cheshire, whose name was White, and in his day there was no one equal to him; at least so my old friends were used to state; and much as they are worn now, there are but few who turn them out scientifically. Preston, and Hammond of London, and Whiting of Bisley, in Gloucestershire, are undeniable hands.

Our forefathers were contented with boots of homely manufacture, and the village professor, no doubt, turned them out in a rough and ready manner; nor do I apprehend the London makers were much superior till Hoby, Bartley, and Burn set the example by turning out hunting-boots

neat and sporting-like. The long black, amphibious-looking, half military, half snipe-shooting, boots may be convenient to itinerant sportsmen, but they are exceedingly unbecoming. Although we have returned nearly to the fashion of the year 1800, the changes that have taken place since that period in the cut and fashion of a sportsman's costume are conspicuous. About five and thirty years ago very short-waisted coats, with remarkably narrow skirts, were worn; the bodies and sleeves were tight, and most miserable garments they were; literally dress coats, worn in the hunting field. The narrow skirts afforded no protection to the thighs from wet or inclement weather; and they were accompanied by white cords equally disagreeable. The tops of the boots were very short, and they were scoured white to match the cords; altogether no design of costume could be more inconsistent, and yet, if a man presumed to wear anything not quite in accordance with the fashion, he was looked upon as a most uncouth monster. Leathers and hunting-caps were quite out of date about the year 1825, and if any gentleman sportsman had presumed to make his appearance in such toggery, his nearest friends would have exercised their charity by a speedy arrangement to relieve him from all intellectual responsibility. In this respect, as in many

others, we have arrived at great improvement. Free trade and freedom of costume go hand in hand, and a man may now wear whatever suits his fancy, without incurring the risk of being *cut* by his most intimate acquaintance, because the *cut* of his coat happens to be different from that of other persons.

By slow degrees these inconsistencies of dress were reformed, *à propos* of time, about the period when the Reform Bill was passed; and they have continued to improve. The fashion of wearing leathers was resuscitated some twenty years ago, I believe, in consequence of the stewards of Croxton Park races, Lords Wilton and Forester and Mr. Maxse, appearing in them on the course. Lord Wilton would have to wear them as a part of his racing costume; and in order that the dress of the stewards should be uniform, his lordship's colleagues most probably adopted the same encasements; after which they found favour in Leicestershire, and the fashion naturally spread into other countries.

To attain distinction in the style of dress suitable for the field is a matter of some difficulty. There are many men who dress well for the ball-room, the promenade, or for ordinary equestrian exercise—who have exquisite taste on those occasions, but who do not evince the same propriety in the

hunting-field. Patent-leather boots and satin scarfs are not calculated to withstand the effects of ploughed fields, deep muddy lanes, and bull-finches; nevertheless we do occasionally see such perpetrations at Cheltenham and Leamington. Mr. Delme Radcliffe, with good taste, eschews black cravats with top-boots under any circumstances; and although a blue bird's-eye is often worn by the most punctilious in dress, it certainly does not carry the correctness of costume which appertains to the white. It is in proper keeping with neatness and the most scrupulous attention to cleanliness.

Any one fastidious in dress, of the present day, is generally recognised in a coat somewhat of the following description. It may be single or double-breasted, made of a good strong cloth, cut nearly straight, with the corners of the skirts just rounded off; the waist made to come down nearly to the cantle of the saddle, to afford protection to the back from cold and wet; the collar moderate in height, and made to turn up in the event of rain; the sleeves large, with inner cuffs of elastic fabric. The body of the coat should be made to fit loosely, as it will be less subject to admit rain; at the same time, if it is extravagantly loose, it will be very cold. Caps are unquestionably preferable to hats for many reasons: they afford greater protection to the head in the event of falls; they are

not so liable to come off either from the effects of the wind or coming in contact with branches of trees, or hedges.

However correctly a man may be "got up" nimself, unless the saddles and bridles he uses are "in concatenation accordingly," the effect will be lost—the snob will peep out. The old-fashioned saddles, such as we see in paintings of horses of the last century, although they have been evidently improved upon in workmanship, were quite correct in form. They were made straight in the seat, not like the Huzzar-fashioned saddles introduced some thirty or forty years since, and perseveringly made to this day by one of the most eminent saddlers in London. The importance of a good saddle will be properly appreciated by any man who has once had a bad one. A huge, ill-contrived, spongy, heavy, Dutch-built production is an abomination not to be endured. A miller's pad is preferable. The old-fashioned straight seat should be observed, very low in the cantle, and the pommel not higher than is absolutely necessary to clear the horse's withers. The skirts of a saddle should be cut in conformity with the make of the rider's thighs, and the consequent position of his legs. A man, who with short thick thighs sits very upright in his seat, requires the skirts of his saddle to be cut straighter than one who is moulded on a more horseman-like model, with

thinner and longer thighs, and who sits with his legs forward. The thickness of the padding in the skirts is also a subject worthy of attention. For the purpose of affording a more secure purchase for the knees and legs, some saddlers make them very thick, which is certainly objectionable: by extending the knees so far apart, the power of the clip is reduced, or at any rate it causes more exertion to bring it into effect. In passing through coverts, or going through stiff fences, the thickness of the stuffing is obviously an impediment. The ease and comfort of the rider are better provided for with a moderate portion of stuffing, and the skirts cut in a position suitable to his seat. The appendages to saddles which have been introduced of late years are by no means sportsmanlike or ornamental. One of these is a contrivance for a drinking flask, made in the fashion of a horn-case; and a horse carrying the insignia may be mistaken for that of the master of the hounds or the huntsman — an affectation which some persons may be silly enough to emulate. Canteens for provisions, emporiums for cigars and spare shoes, are occasionally seen suspended from the sides. I could not avoid noticing a saddle which I saw recently, with all these fittings, at Bath, made by Mr. Hunt, which at first I imagined was destined for some sporting emigrant about to proceed to a country where it would be necessary to carry a

supply equal to a week's consumption; but on inquiry, I found that was not the case. Mr. Hunt deserves all praise for the ingenuity of the contrivances, which were extended even to an apparatus for lighting cigars, quaintly inserted under one of the flaps, and which, in my ignorance, I mistook for some mechanical device.

Assuredly saddle-makers in the country have improved exceedingly, within the last ten years, in their manner of finishing those important articles; and a man need not to despair of obtaining one at Bath, Worcester, Cheltenham, Shrewsbury, Leamington, and other towns: but if he desires to have a superior one, he must go to a first-rate London house, such as Whippy's, Oldacre's, or Heaven's; for be it remembered, most of the others in the great metropolis are only on an equality with the country makers.

Forming a part of the sportsman's paraphernalia, a whip is not the most insignificant article. Steeple-chasing has the credit of having introduced into the hunting-field an implement similar to the racing-whip, but with a strong hook at the head. The crop without the thong preceded this; and that, in all probability, was the parent of the steeple-chase invention. Even a short hooked stick was in vogue at one period with young gentlemen who aspired to consequential and slang-like notoriety. A neat, light whip, with

rather a short thong, is the most consistent in the hand of a sportsman. It may, perhaps, be objected, that as a gentleman who is a mere spectator is not about to act the part of a whipper-in, the thong is an unnecessary and useless encumbrance: but that is not exactly correct; there are times when it is useful. When in covert, for example, while passing along a ride, hounds often come suddenly very close to the heels of the horses, which will occasion some to lash out. The whip, being held out, with the thong in a pendulous state, will act as a caution, and prevent an accident. The same thing frequently happens in a road; and every gentleman who goes out to enjoy a day's sport must feel excessively annoyed if any little want of care and attention on his part should be the cause of injury to a valuable hound. The appointments do not appear to be complete unless there is a thong to the whip; but the application of it to the hounds by a stranger would doubtless be an act of the most egregious impropriety. I once saw an individual arrayed in pink —the only insignia of the sportsman about him, I must observe—as he was riding through a covert, strike a hound most vigorously with his whip. The hound was industriously feeling for a cold scent; and I could not avoid inquiring the cause of such an indiscreet assault. The reply was, that he wanted to send the hound on to the others;

and yet it was one of the leading hounds. If such an act had been perpetrated in the presence of many masters of hounds, their benedictions would not have been inaudible, or their expressions restrained to the mildest terms. Certainly persons who do not observe more decorum in the use of their whips, would do well to leave the thongs at home.

CHAP. XVI.

The True Sportsman.—The Sporting Man.—Definition of a Sportsman.—Definition of a Sporting Man.—Refinement.—Rivalry.—Pressing on Hounds.—Inadvertent Collisions.—Unsportsman-like Riding.—A Recommendation.—Argument in Support of the Chase.—Motives for Hunting.—A Sportsman recognised.—A Snob.—Shy Characters.—A Taste for the Noble Science.—A Taste for Hunting.—A Knowledge of Hunting conducive to Enjoyment.—Events which call for Observation.—Breaking Covert.—A Check.—Principal Packs of Hounds in 1800.—Principal Packs of Hounds in 1853.—A Computation.—Subscription Packs.—Reasons for Subscribing.—Qualifications of Masters of Hounds.—Advertising Appointments.—Query concerning Fast and Slow Hounds.—Flashy Hounds.—Quick Hounds.—Objections to Slow Hounds.—A Run with the Belvoir.—A Run with Lord Drumlanrig's Hounds.

THE general character of the English sportsman undoubtedly never stood so high, if it be fairly investigated, as it does at the present period, and it is a gratifying fact that their numbers are daily increasing. But it is necessary to observe the distinction between the sportsman, and the sporting man; one is the genuine, the other the assumed condition. Of the latter I think comparatively their numbers are on the decrease. In these remarks I must be understood as confining my observations within the circle

connected with the chase, totally exclusive of all the host which has sprung up on the speculative fabric of the turf.

The term of sportsman, if properly interpreted, signifies a man who delights in the legitimate sports of the field, whether it be racing, hunting, shooting, or fishing. And he enjoys the sport only when it is conducted according to fair and honourable practices, in which with becoming spirit he can participate. In this category all classes, with the distinction of their respective stations, may be enrolled, from the most affluent peer to the poorest peasant. If either were to transgress the conventional rules of sporting, he would lose caste, as the poacher does who snares the hares and pheasants. The difference between the sportsman and sporting man is very clear and distinct; the former is replete with high bearing, hospitality integrity of purpose, manliness, candour, frankness, a zealous desire to contribute to the amusement, happiness, and welfare of all his fellow beings; he is generously liberal, and his purse is ever open according to its capacity to relieve distress. Zealously devoted to sport, he enters into it *con amore*, watching every event with interest; thus he derives all the enjoyments the pursuit is capable of affording. The sporting man, on the other hand, is quite a different character. He professes to be fond of field sports

because he imagines it raises him in the estimation of his unsophisticated companions, and he fancies he deceives others into the same impressions. The most interesting occurrences in the chase or other sporting events are unheeded, because he is scarcely able, even if willing, to appreciate them. He may or he may not be a hard-riding man; but if he is, his presence with hounds is a source of regret, because he never fails to over-ride them when he has an opportunity, for the sake of distinction, which is his greatest idol. The manners of the gentleman are innate in the sportsman, though assumed by the sporting man, who mingles some little inapplicable technicalities with slang — sure indication of a vulgar mind.

Refinement has made its way to the covert side as well as into the more polished spheres of social intercourse. Courtesy and decorum are as necessary in the field as in the drawing-room, and the same observance of etiquette which stamps the gentleman in one situation accompanies him in the other. Rivalry comes into effect principally in a run, and is very inoffensive in its nature. Some ardent spirits are ambitious of the lead, while others are perfectly indifferent who may be before or behind them, so long as they are in a position to see the hounds perform their work. Perchance the latter are the most zealous in the good cause. If gentlemen would not ride

quite so close to hounds and to each other as they usually do, it would be more conducive to sport and personal convenience. One man may come in contact with another in an open field, no insult or annoyance is intended, neither is any injury sustained; a mutual apology ensues and sets all right. But on approaching a fence, it is a different affair. In case the one who is leading happens to fall, and another is following close on his heels, the great probability is that the latter cannot stop his horse in time, and, therefore, rides over his companion. This is an unwarrantable custom, but too frequently practised in the fast and fashionable countries. There is also another great evil in this unworkman-like style of riding. Many horses will go perfectly safe, cool, and collected at their fences when not too closely pressed, but will rush at them when they find others close on their quarters; a similar degree of excitement prevails with many hunters when they are following very near to others. Attempting to go up and take the lead of another on approaching a fence is yet more unsportsman-like. Ambitious gentlemen who desire to make up lost ground had far better take another line by riding at a fresh place, than by following others, if it be through a gap.

The notion that fox-hunting is on the decline, is quite at variance with facts. The comparisons

which I have endeavoured to draw with accuracy in these pages must rebut such an assertion. Many of the manners and customs of the chase have been altered to suit the tastes, the habits, and the convenience of the present generation; but those changes do not denote decline. If any country becomes vacant, there are numerous candidates for the honour of hunting it; and every season the numbers who assemble at the covert side are on the increase. It is an argument with those who are jealous of all changes that there are not so many who go out from a pure love of hunting, and the details connected therewith, as there were in former days. At the same time that I am not in a position to admit that conclusion, it would be inadmissible to scrutinise the motive of every individual who comes out to meet hounds. Whether a man derives his enjoyment from admiring a fine pack of hounds in first-rate condition, from seeing them draw for and find their fox in a true sporting style, racing and hunting their game, and finally killing in the most perfect manner, assisted by a clever huntsman; or whether he merely comes out as an almost unobservant, unobtrusive addition to the group, so that he conducts himself with propriety, not in any way interrupting sport or doing mischief by heading foxes and overriding hounds, he ought to be, and I think is, invariably welcomed at the covert side, even if

he merely comes there to show himself; and he ought also to be numbered as one participating in and patronising the sports of the field.

There are, however, many excellent sportsmen, who may be easily recognised by a stranger, attendant upon all the popular packs of the day. They may be seen, ere they have exchanged the horses they have ridden to covert for their hunters, scrutinising the pack, and making anxious inquiries of the huntsman and whips, by whom they are received with civility, attention, and respect; but if a snob approaches, he is greeted with a request not to bring his horse among the hounds, lest he should kick them. At the same time, a great number of those who have arrived will be seen in groups at a distance from the pack, evidently careless and probably ignorant of the condition of hounds, and apparently apprehensive of approaching too near. Sometimes that caution arises from a consciousness of mischievous riding on a previous day, and the expectation of receiving a merited remonstrance from the master of the hounds. Many of those who hunt constantly do not care one jot how a fox is found, or how the pack performs the duties; neither do they think or care whether a gallop is the effect of chance, or the scientific management of the master and huntsman. They may only go out to ride, or perchance from a less ostensible motive—for the sake of say-

ing they hunt; but still the numerical force proclaims the fact, that, as a national amusement, fox-hunting is held in the highest estimation.

A distinction may be drawn between a taste for the science of fox-hunting, and that of a taste merely for hunting. The former may be understood as combining a knowledge of all the minutiæ connected with the chase, such as breeding hounds, the most celebrated blood, the peculiar propensities of certain hounds, condition, style of drawing coverts, finding, pace, hunting, steadiness, stoutness, and all the good or bad properties for which hounds are distinguished. To be conversant with these, a man must be a true lover of hunting, and enjoy opportunities of cultivating his observations to an extent not on all occasions available, or compatible with other engagements. Yet I must make the remark, that the more intimately a man is acquainted with the details which may be classed with the science of fox-hunting, the more he will be gratified with that popular amusement. A man may not be in a position to study the means which are adapted to bring a pack of hounds to the covert side in that state of perfection which is essential for the purpose of showing sport. These are matters, it must be admitted, in which the public do not necessarily bear a part in the accomplishment, but there are many little items connected with field management and discipline

which are not only essential to the enjoyment of a day's sport, but an acquaintance with which is necessary in order to avoid interruption to the sport of those who are assembled. Unless a man devotes his attention to the hounds when they are drawing for their fox, he loses in all probability the first act in the most interesting scene of the day—the find—and when the fox is on his legs, without paying attention to the proceedings of the pack, a man can form no idea in what direction the fox will most probably break covert. Neglecting this, he may probably be in a situation to head the varmint back again, for which he is severely remonstrated with by the master of the hounds; or being on the opposite side of the covert, loses the start; either of which events produce feelings of mortification. The only alternative for one who is a novice, or is indifferent to the very interesting events so happily blended with fox-hunting, is to mingle with the crowd, and when the fox breaks covert, to content himself with following a leader or leaders, as the case may be. The fox having got clear of the covert, the hounds having settled down to the scent, and being seen scoring away at a racing pace, every man has a chance of riding and exhibiting his prowess; but here it is absolutely necessary he should pay attention to passing events if he has obtained the enviable position of showing himself in the first flight;

just having done so, some change may take place; either the hounds over run the scent and come to a check, or gain a covert. The hero ambitious of riding fame, if he should have assisted in pressing the hounds beyond the line, sustains a double mortification,—firstly, from the censure of the master of the hounds, and secondly, from the conviction that he has not only defeated his own purpose and interest, but also interrupted the sport of his companions by his own inadvertence.

Towards the conclusion of the last, and about the commencement of the present century, there were very few regular packs of hounds kept, comparatively to what we now have. Each pack ranged over a great extent of country, and they seldom hunted more than three days in the week. There were, no doubt, several scratch packs, or trencher packs as they were termed, which were kept at walks throughout the winter, used for the purpose of hunting fox or hare; but they could not come under the denomination of regular establishments, the chief of which consisted of the Dukes of Rutland and Beaufort's; those of the Earls Yarborough, Berkeley, Fitzwilliam, Scarborough, Spencer, Stamford and Warrington; Sir R. Pulestone; Messrs. Meynell, Corbet, Forester, Warde, Childe, Lambton, Poyntz, and Heron. If we add to these about half a dozen packs of minor fame, exclusive of the trencher

packs, the total number will not amount to twenty-five. At the present date the following list exhibits nearly four times that number —

The Albrighton,
The Atherstone,
The Badsworth,
The Duke of Beaufort's,
The Bedale,
The Belvoir,
The Berkshire,
The Blackmore Vale,
The Bramham Moor,
The Brocklesby,
The Burton,
The Cambridgeshire,
The Cheshire,
The Cleveland,
Mr. Colyer's,
The Craven,
The Crawley and Horsham,
The South Devon,
The South Down,
Mr. Drake's,
The Durham County,
Lord Elcho's,
The East Essex,
The Essex and Suffolk,
The Essex Union,
The South Essex,
Mr. Farquharson's,
Earl Fitzhardinge's,
Earl Fitzwilliam's,
The Four Barrow,
Mr. Furze's,
Mr. Garth's,
The H. H.,
Mr. Henley Greave's,
The Hambledon,
The Haydon,
The Herefordshire,
The Holderness,
The Hursley,
The Hurworth,
Mr. Meynell Ingram's,
Isle of Wight,
The Kent,
The Ledbury,
Lord Lonsdale's,
The Ludlow,
Mr. Lumley's,
Mr. Lushington's,
The Monmouthshire,
Mr. Morgan's,
Sir Charles Morgan's,
The New Forest,
Mr. Newton's,
The Oakley,
Mr. Phillips's,
Mr. Lort Phillips's,
The Puckeridge,
The Pytchley,
The Quorn,
The Raby,
The Rufford,
Mr. Russell's,
Sir H. Seale's,
The Shropshire,

The Sinnington,
Mr. T. A. Smith's,
The West Somerset,
Lord Southampton's,
The North Staffordshire,
The Suffolk,
The Surrey Union,
The East Sussex,
The Tindale,
The Tiverton,
Mr. Trelawney's,
The United Pack
The Vale of White Horse,
The South Wilts,
The South Wold,
The North Warwickshire,
The Warwickshire,
The Wheatland,
Mr. Wheble's,
Mr. Willoughby's (late Sir T. Sykes),
The Worcestershire,
The Wye Side,
Sir W. W. Wynn's,
Col. Wyndham's,
The York and Ainsty.

WALES.

The Begelly,
The Carmarthenshire,
The Cresselly,
The Goggerddan,
Mr. Powell's,
The Stone Hall,
The Teify Side.

Three of these packs hunt six days in the week, three five days, about two or three and twenty four days, six or seven and twenty three days, and the remainder two, some of them occasionally varying according to circumstances; but the average may be laid as nearly as possible at three days in the week. Thus we have to all intents and purposes four times as much hunting as our ancestors enjoyed. Those noblemen and gentlemen whom I have enumerated as masters of hounds some fifty years since maintained their establishments entirely at their own expense, whereas more than three-fourths of those which are now at work are kept by subscription, and

there are many very forcible arguments which may be urged in favour of that custom. There are but few noblemen or gentlemen so overwhelmed with money and otherwise circumstanced as to render their incurring all the expenses a matter of propriety, even if they were so disposed. Sons and heirs-at-law may not think it fair that the expenses of a sport which affords health and amusement to thousands should fall upon the shoulders of an individual ancestor; nor would it be any consolation to a son, on coming into possession of an encumbered estate, to know that the difficulties which surround him were incurred by the expenses of keeping hounds for the amusement of the county. It is not unfrequently a very difficult task to meet with a gentleman duly qualified to take the management of a pack of hounds. The undertaking involves a number of little events which are never dreamt of by a novice, and thus so many give up their task after a year or two's probation. A man must either be possessed of very ample funds and some zeal for the good cause, or a vast deal of zeal backed by a liberal subscription; and considering the immense number of persons who are daily in the habit of meeting hounds during the winter season, there is no justifiable reason why subscriptions should not be liberal in the extreme. Gentlemen who fairly consider the matter, whether

they live in London, Cheltenham, Leamington, or any other place, ought to bear in mind the heavy expenses and responsibilities in which a master of hounds involves himself, and when participating in the amusement, should at least contribute to the expenses.

The appointments of nearly every pack of hounds are advertised. It is a notice, or, in fact, an invitation to join them, and it was introduced when the popularity of fox-hunting was rising. The first intimation of the kind that I have been able to discover was about forty years ago, when the publishers of newspapers were desirous to charge masters of hounds for the insertion which they are now glad to give as an essential piece of intelligence.

It is a question which I have frequently heard discussed, whether the slow hounds of ancient days did not afford more sport than the speedy ones of the present. Here it must be observed, that the speed of a single hound does not decide the speed of the pack. It is the head they carry, and their quickness in turning with the scent, or recovering it when lost, which constitutes the pace. This is, no doubt, a subject on which it is rather hazardous to express an opinion; but those of the present day are decidedly best adapted for our purposes. The number of foxes killed by any particular pack of hounds affords

no criterion of the sport they have enjoyed. I cannot subscribe to the opinion that a slow hound shall be capable of hunting a colder scent than a fast one. Perhaps speed may inculcate the idea of impetuosity, and thus if a fast hound will not take time to feel for and make out a cold scent, he may be deficient in that respect, which is more the result of temper and management than capacity. There is always a distinction to be made between a fast hound and a quick one. The hound which is quick in turning with the scent and hitting it off after a check, will get nearer to his fox than one that may be individually more speedy, if the latter is not quick in his work. A slow hound, even if he be able to hunt a cold scent, must always labour under this disadvantage: not being able to get forward with it so speedily when running, there must be a great probability of its dying away when a fox makes for a distant point.

As specimens of the stoutness occasionally evinced by hounds and foxes, the two following accounts of runs are in all probability unequalled in the annals of fox-hunting. The first was with the Belvoir hounds, the other with Lord Drumlanrig's; and the communication was from his lordship to the Editor of "Bell's Life." There are just eighteen years between the date of the two, and the run with Lord Drumlanrig's hounds

serves to corroborate my remarks respecting the stoutness and superiority of mountain foxes.

On Tuesday, December 18th, 1833, the Duke of Rutland's hounds met at Newton Toll-bar, the wind south-west and the atmosphere cold. A little before twelve, the hounds were thrown into Falkingham Gorse, which held a varmint old fox, that for three seasons had beaten this pack over the same line of country, and was still left to beat them again. Almost at the first dash of the hounds into covert, he broke gallantly "away," and was viewed with his head pointing for his accustomed line, and "Now for the Fens," was reiterated through the field. He went away at a rattling pace with the hounds almost close to his brush, passing Threckingham Town-end near the Lincoln road, on to Spanby and Swaton Bridge-end, turned to Thorpe Latimer for Car Dyke, up to which point Lord Forester, Messrs. Charles and Robert Manners, Mr. Housman, and a few others, were well up with the hounds, but the dyke proved a stopper. Mr. Willerton was the only gentleman who crossed the dyke, which he accomplished with great difficulty. The others made for a place that was fordable, and after losing a considerable space of time, got on to the line, when inquiries were made which way the hounds had gone. "Straight away, and only one gentleman with them," was the answer, and all put forward at

best pace, hoping a check would let them in. A more formidable place than the Car Dyke then presented itself, the Helpringham Eau, a deep bottomless drain, some fifty feet wide. Mr. Willerton crossed this also, but the hounds were out of sight. The second whip followed Mr. Willerton's example, and with the exception of Goosey and Mr. Tindle, who, after riding some two hours and a half in the direction of Boston, came up with the hounds at last: no one else saw anything of the run. Goosey got to his hounds just as it was getting dark, and being then thirty-four miles from home, in a strange country, thought it prudent to whip off, and reached the kennel about half-past one the next morning. During the last half-hour, the fox was never above ten minutes before the hounds, and latterly they were frequently in the same field together. He was one of the coolest hands ever known; and after crossing one of the fen drains, he was seen to go into a stackyard and rub his sides against a stack, starting off as soon as he heard the hounds approaching. When they whipped off, he was not five minutes before them; and took up his quarters that night in a shed, within two hundred yards of the place. The distance was thirty-seven miles from point to point without any turnings, and considering all things, could not be less than forty-five miles. The run lasted three hours and thirty-

seven minutes, with only three or four short checks.

Comment is unnecessary; it serves to show what hounds can do by themselves on a good-scenting day when unmolested by a crowd of horsemen. We have here another example of a similar kind, of more recent date.

A runaway Run in the Hills of Dumfriesshire.

Mr. Editor,

Mr. Smith has said that there are foxes who will beat *any* hounds in *any* country; and it was Mr. Delmé Radcliffe, I believe, who, without flatly contradicting Mr. Smith, expressed a wish that some of his friends might be allowed to tackle these long-striding customers, and try their chance with them before subscribing to so startling a doctrine. I am too young a hand, and I have yet too much to learn in the "noble science" to decide between such great authorities; but I had yesterday (and I wish they had both been with me), over the wildest and over the best-scenting country I know of in the world, a run, considering all that occurred, the most extraordinary I not only ever rode to, but ever heard of in the annals of fox-hunting. I am induced to send you the following particulars as a tribute not to what the riders did, but as a tribute which is fairly due to what a fox really can do when found in a strange country, and when determined to go home. Our meet was Carmichael, the extreme west fixture in the country.

The morning was very misty, and it was nearly twelve o'clock before the hounds were put into cover. We did not find at Carmichael, and went back three miles to the Barr Cover, a small larch wood of about seven acres, on the side of a steep hill, but which always holds a fox. We found instanter. I viewed the fox away, and the hounds coming handy to my holloa, were settled well on him before he had three minutes' start of us. I looked at my watch; it pointed to twenty minutes past one o'clock. At four o'clock the same evening, five and twenty miles off, as direct as the crow flies, my hounds were last seen; and, from all I can learn, they were carrying a good head beyond Durrisdeer, near Sanquhar, going right in the direction of the Lead Hills. I can give little or no description of the run. I had two horses out, and I rode both of them to a stand-still before reaching Loch Katterick, twelve miles from where we found. Mr. Charles Hope Johnstone, my first whip, and Mr. Bordell, from Dumfries, got thus far, but no farther. If ever the hounds checked, it was unknown to me; for after the first twenty minutes, neither I nor any one was within a mile of them. Indeed, had it not been for the sheep, we should never have guessed their line even; our first field was a plough field—a good long one it was—but after that, heather and grass every yard of the way—right through the hills we went; but the hills were not steep, and had this run been in March or in October, no better galloping ground could have been wished for; after the wet weather, however, it was very sticky. I cannot tell you if the

hounds killed. I cannot tell you even where they ran to. I know not even if ever I shall see them all again. My whip and I slept at Thornhill last night: and we have been all day blowing our horns on the hills — and have recovered six couple of hounds — the rest of them may have returned to the kennels thirty miles off. We start for there at nine o'clock to-night. Not only is it, I think, a great feat for a fox, with only three minutes' start, to have reached a country five and twenty miles off in less than three hours, but when on the hills to-day we were shown by the shepherds (and they could have had no object in telling an untruth) a positive precipice, what we call in Scotland a scan, up which the fox and hounds went. Camp Cleuch was the name of the place. This scan is full of earths, and it was natural to suppose that this was the fox's point from the commencement of his journey, since he went to it at all. But it appears that afterwards this same fox or a fresh fox came down into the low country again; at any rate the hounds did, and they were last seen, or rather heard running past Durrisdeer, three miles beyond Camp Cleuch. I believe, without vanity, that so extraordinary a feat for a fox to perform deserves to be chronicled, and this is my sole object: from what I hear of my hounds they carried a head and did their best — angels could do no more. Recollect that our fox did not steal away, but was pressed from the very beginning of the run; and I may add that so small a fox was he, that I remarked to a farmer who was near me, soon after he broke cover, "This is only a

cub, and if he attempts the moor country, we shall run into him directly!" If ever I recover my hounds and have another run, I will let you know.

DRUMLANRIG.

Thornhill, Saturday, December 20, 1851.

MR. EDITOR,

I am well aware that it is not the usual practice for a M. F. H. to publish himself the feats performed in his own country or by his own hounds; but I trust that in this single instance a conscientious desire to do full justice to the gallant heart and to the powers of endurance which on Friday last were so wonderfully exhibited by our Barr Cover fox in his flight into Nithsdale, may plead successfully against imputation either of vanity or presumption on my part. Peace be to his manes! for he lived not to tell his own tale, but died on the banks of the River Nith, five miles from the town of Sanquhar. *Eheu quorum pars non fui!* I only heard this last crowning piece of news to-day, having returned into that part of the country in search of two hounds who are still missing. The rest, I may mention, all made their appearance at the kennel between six and eleven o'clock the day after the run. My first whip and I have ridden the run backwards since this morning; at least enough of the ground (by the help of a road which runs for several miles parallel to the line we went on Friday) to have gained a perfect knowledge of the country gone over, both as regards its nature and its extent.

I have lived in Dumfriesshire all my life, and I remember five different packs of hounds here; but I neither myself ever crossed this part of the country before, nor does the oldest inhabitant, as far as I can discover, recollect seeing or hearing of hounds crossing it beyond the first six miles of our run. I believe on my word that this run can hardly be paralleled. The hounds—five or six couple of them at least—were settled well on their fox while he was still in my view. I can swear that for the first six miles they never checked for one single instant; after that I am hardly an authority; for, getting a fall over a stone wall, I lost sight of them, and never was able again to recover my lost ground. Mr. Charles Hope Johnstone, and Joseph Graham, the first whip—who passed me while on the ground—from that point continued to lead, but saw little more of the hounds than I did; but I have spoken to several shepherds and farmers on my way home to-day, and, except for about half a minute, I have no evidence—indeed, strong presumptive evidence to the contrary—that the hounds ever checked at all. The fox was killed in the River Nith, two miles above Durrisdeer, and this latter-named place is as the crow flies more than twenty miles from the Barr Cover. There were two bends in the run—one a sweep round by the left in the early part of the run, as if going to Dalswinton, a common line for a fox to take in this part of the country; then, changing his mind, or at any rate his course, he held on upwards: many miles further on after passing Queensbury, and upon entering the

Duke of Buccleuch's property, he dodged round a farm-house, tried to enter some sheds, and failing in such attempts, he turned in full view both of hounds and several farm servants, and went right up a steep mountain called Camp Cleuch. Here they disappeared; but presently returned into the low country over the far shoulder of this mountain, about two miles off, and in full view of the herd on this farm; from thence they held on to Durrisdeer, where both fox and hounds were seen by a Mr. Dickson, who declares that they were running in view. It was, however, ten miles further on, in the actual bed of the River Nith, that the hounds were seen eating this truly gallant fox — *Quæque ipsa non vidi.* The clergyman's son was passing by on the high road, and is my informant on this most truly grand announcement. May I not say, *finis coronat opus?* Now for the time; it was, as I said in my last, exactly *by my* watch twenty minutes after one o'clock when I viewed the fox away. I was told the next morning that at four o'clock the hounds were last seen running past Durrisdeer. It was, however, as I well remember, very dark at four o'clock according *to my* watch; and on further inquiry, I am positively told by the Duke of Buccleuch's gamekeeper among others, that the day was still quite clear when the hounds passed that place. It must consequently have been rather under the two hours and a half from the find at the Barr Cover to the kill in the Nith, half way between Thornhill and Sanquhar, and I am prepared to prove that the ground gone over is as near, if not

nearer thirty, than five and twenty miles. As to the nature of the ground, it was perfection for hounds; heather, and green grassy hills; with the exception of the Camp Clouch, there was little or no steep ground gone over. Had this run taken place in the month of March, when the moors are dry, no true lover of a wild, real fox-hunting run need, with a thorough-bred horse, have desired, even for mere riding's sake, a greater treat; as it was, the recent rain had made the hills very sticky. And now, Mr. Editor, farewell. I have endeavoured to do full credit to the memory and to the stout heart of this most extraordinary fox; his equals have, I venture to submit, been rarely known. *Floreat scientia — esto perpetua.*

DRUMLANRIG.

Glen Stuart, Monday.

CHAP. XVII.

First Object of Hunting. — Health promoted. — Excitement to take Exercise. —The Sportsman's Season. — Cub-hunting.— Ardour for the Chase.—Change of Habits.—Yachting and other Amusements.—Woodland Hunting.—Devotees to Cub-hunting.—The Sportsman's Hopes. —Anticipations.—Opening Day with the Quorn—With Mr. Corbet's — With Mr. Thomas Assheton Smith's—With Mr. Wheble's.—The Month of November.—Social Changes.—Railway Forebodings.—Effects of Railways.—Preparatory Exercise.—Practical Experience. —Abstemiousness. — Indulgence incompatible with strong Exercise —Expenses of Hunting Establishments.— Number of Hunting Establishments. — Average Expenses. — Calculation of the Yorkshire Gazette. — General Estimate.—Benefits resulting from Fox-hunting to Landlords and Tenants. — Market for Hay and Oats.—Conclusion.

When hunting was first adopted by man, it was undeniably for the purpose of procuring food, subsequently for the destruction of ferocious beasts; and experience soon added another, and not less interesting, motive. However necessary the possession of the precious metal is to procure the blandishments of social life, without health the possessor is not in a condition to appreciate and enjoy the boon. The discovery was made in very early times, that strong exercise was essential to the promotion of bodily health and vigour. It is reasonable to presume,

that in all ages those who were not compelled to labour for their daily existence required some stimulus to exertion, and although the ancient inhabitants of Great Britain had not to contend against many of the evils which accompany luxurious indulgence, yet the science of medicine was but imperfectly understood. Hence the energetic engagements of the chase were earnestly recommended as an antidote to plethoric disorders, by the earliest writers upon, and advocates of the soul-stirring amusement. Whether a man reposes under the conviction that he follows the chase, inspired only with the pure love of sport — whether he is actuated by the influential sway of fashion, or whether he adopts the life of a sportsman ostensibly for the promotion of his health — still the object is attained, and each devotee to the chaste goddess is at the same time courting Hygeia according to the most pleasing interpretation of his own fancy.

The sportsman's season may be dated from the 12th of August, commencing with grouse shooting, to which deer-stalking and fishing may be claimed as auxiliaries. The gay attractions of the metropolis have lost their charms, and all who have the power have assuredly the will to quit that murky atmosphere, and feast their appetite on rural pastimes. Cub-hunting usually commences about the same period as grouse-shooting; but it is a

sport in which few of the present day are disposed to join. Does not this rather denote that our grandsires were more devoted to sylvan pleasures than the present generation, when the former would brave the inclemency of a dreary peradventure tempestuous, ride to covert on a dark morning in December, in order to commence operations at break of day; yet few will now arise from their couch to greet the sun in all his splendour on a beautiful autumnal morning. The truth is, that our habits have changed, and inclinations are extensively subservient to habits. The avocations of shooting and numerous other engagements afford legitimate pretexts for the sportsman of 1853 not attending to the tutelage of the merry pack during their probationary course of cub-hunting. It must also be observed, that there is now a diversity of amusements open to the enjoyment of all who are fortunate enough to possess the means of paying for them. Yachting ranks among the most attractive, and with fair weather, the month of September and part of October may be passed agreeably on the sea-coast.

There are several reasons why cub-hunting is not a favourite amusement with every man who at a more advanced season is devotedly attached to fox-hunting. The most extensive woodlands are selected, for the purpose of driving the foxes

from their strongholds, and, by frequently disturbing them in those quarters, induce them to resort to the small coverts, which, being kept scrupulously quiet, are to be regarded as certain places of finding when the season is more advanced. Another object being that of killing the cubs, the old foxes are permitted to break away, while the juveniles are headed back. Such woodland pastime does not assimilate with the taste of hard riders, who desire nothing but a burst over the open; and the fox-hunter who comes out for fashion's sake must necessarily repudiate such practices. The fields are therefore numerically small and exclusively select, consisting principally of the master of the hounds, obviously anxious to watch the expanding instinct of his young entry. A few true devotees of the chase, and probably a farmer or two residing in the neighbourhood, usually form the little group. Those who confine their hunting generally to one pack of hounds naturally acquire an interest in all their proceedings. As the soldier describes the glorious achievements of the regiment to which he belongs, so does the sportsman proudly boast of the prowess of the pack which he identifies as that to which he belongs: and each makes the distinction from all others as *our* regiment, and *our* hounds. With them much gratification is obtained in cub-hunting; they participate with the master in the

promising conduct of the rising generation. The first touch on the horn, or the first challenge of the hound, is sufficient to awaken them from their slumbers; they enter into the sport with enthusiasm and delight. Every year, and every season of the year, opens with a series of anticipations contemplative of forthcoming destinies, which await the pleasures, the interests, and the vicissitudes which are in store. The sportsman entertains sanguine hopes that the foxes are plentiful, that the young hounds will enter favourably, and that a good-scenting season will assist them in the development of their powers.

The approach of the hunting-season brings to new life a host of pleasing engagements and joyful expectations. The daily progress of the hunter's condition, as the time draws near, is a source of interest alike with those who are enabled to keep large studs and those who are compelled to confine their limits to a single horse. Possibly it proves an excuse for a brief visit to the metropolis to replenish the wardrobe, the saddlery department, or other of the sportsman's requisites, which the last season's campaign had rendered unfit for actual service.

I am unable to discover the custom which was adopted by the great Mr. Meynell, of bidding welcome to the first day of the season, and am therefore led to the conclusion that there was no

general rule observed; but it has been the practice for many years, with the Quorn Hounds, to meet at Kirby Gate on the first Monday in November. It is a glorious sight, and worth going a long distance to enjoy, when the best horses, belonging to the best men in the best country in England, are in attendance? Can there be a man whose soul is so inanimate as not to be aroused by such a gladsome festival? If there be one in this unhappy condition, I would beseech him, as he loves himself, his kindred, and his country, to hie him to the joyful cry. It will dispel his lethargic dreams, elevate his hopes, beguile his cares, and render his temper gracious. At the time when Mr. Corbet hunted Warwickshire, it was customary for the members of the club to meet at their head-quarters, Stratford-on-Avon, on the first Monday in November; and on that day the Lord Willoughby de Broke tendered his hospitalities to a numerous party at dinner. It was an example worthy of imitation, and added much grace to the auspicious occasion.

The hospitable mansion, Tidworth House, is thrown open by Mr. T. A. Smith on the first regular hunting-day in the respective seasons. To say that it equals Kirby Gate in the exhibition of the equestrian order, would be a transgression of the truth, for the surrounding country does not contain or require such studs; but the canine

members of this celebrated establishment cannot be excelled, and it is a treat of which every sportsman should avail himself, if within reach. Every visitor is welcomed, and ushered through the magnificently appointed rooms, where a repast is laid out, of everything tempting to the appetite and gratifying to the palate. This festival usually takes place on the Thursday which falls nearest to the 1st of November. A splendid conservatory, containing choice plants, leads from the house to the stables, which are on these occasions thrown open for the inspection of the visitors. There is a covered ride, appropriated to the use of the stud in bad weather, rather more than a furlong in extent — a convenience of great advantage; and everything which wealth and good judgment can suggest is carefully provided both for hounds and horses.

A similar practice was observed by the late Sir John Cope during the time he hunted the Bramshill country, and is still continued by his successor Mr. Wheble.

Gloomy associations are wont to be connected with the month of November; but the pleasures of the chase are well calculated to remove them. The cheering sound of the horn rouses the sportsman from his reverie, and gives new life to his soul. "The echoing hills and chiding hounds invite;" and fox-hunting dispels all our cares. Wonderful changes have taken place within the

last few years in our social policy. Trade has flourished to an unprecedented extent; and the enjoyments of the chase are available among a vast number of her Majesty's liege subjects who, in former days, were precluded from participating in the amusement. None have derived greater benefit from these changes than those whose inclinations or occupations involve the necessity of a residence in the metropolis. Nothing can more effectually minister to their health and pleasure than fox-hunting. It is an acceptable relaxation from daily occupations; and the clear atmosphere of the country is an agreeable change for the murky clouds of London.

When railways were first introduced, grave forebodings were expressed, that they would be the cause of exterminating fox-hunting, and several masters of hounds expressed their intentions of giving up their establishments; intentions which, it is almost needless to observe, have not in any one instance been put into effect. Fears were anticipated that foxes would run the line, and the hounds following them, in the event of a train coming at the time, that the whole pack would be destroyed. These apprehensions were fortunately groundless, for the railways are *lines* which foxes repudiate. The principal effect which railroads produce, is causing foxes to run short; for they are not even partial to crossing them,

and I have observed several instances of their running parallel with the railroads when not hard pressed. The accommodations which railways afford are more than commensurate with the evils; and a fox-hunter desirous to do so, may vary the scene of his venatic pleasures with great ease, and at a comparatively trifling cost; not forgetting, however, to be provided with a change of clothes, to be put on before he returns after the day's sport. Nothing is more conducive to rheumatic affections and colds, than travelling in any kind of carriage without changing the dress. Even if there has not been any rain to wet the garments, the perspiration produced by the exertion of riding, causes a dampness peculiarly disagreeable and dangerous.

Unaccustomed to exercise, the human frame is not in a state to bear even moderate efforts without fatigue. Condition is of great importance to man, and those who lead sedentary lives will find it greatly conducive to their convenience if they will undergo some probationary work prior to the commencement of the hunting season. Shooting for those who have the inclination and opportunity to engage in it, is an excellent introduction. Without strong exercise, the body soon accumulates a deposit of fat, in every respect opposed to quick and laborious pursuits, and in a state of comparative inactivity the muscles lose

much of their power. Wasting to the excess which jockeys practise, is not necessary to enjoy the privileges of the hunting-field, unless for persons who have become corpulent and unwieldy. To those it may be recommended as decidedly advantageous, but a few walks in two or three extra flannel waistcoats, and proportionate abstemious living previously to taking the field, will be found highly conducive to condition and the perfect enjoyment of the chase. I offer this suggestion with the greatest confidence from my own experience. When Heaton Park races were in fashion, I was always in the habit of reducing myself to ride the light weights, after which I kept myself in condition till the hunting season commenced, and I experienced the benefit of doing so. It will be generally conceded, that when a man is oppressed with fatigue, much of the pleasure which he may derive from any amusement is considerably diminished. One who is accustomed to dancing, experiences no inconvenience on the following day; while those who are out of practice can scarcely move. And thus it is with horse exercise. Unless a man is constantly in the saddle, or taking other strong exercise, the first day's hunting tires him exceedingly. Perhaps many sportsmen may exclaim against restriction on their appetites for the sake of hunting, but those who will not refrain from

luxurious indulgences must be content to compromise their enjoyments in other ways. A simple light dinner with two or three glasses of wine after hunting, prepares a man for the following day, when he arises fresh and vigorous; whereas a rich repast, with an abundance of wine or spirits, occasions indigestion, head-ache, and nervous debility, in which state no man can enjoy himself, much less is he in a comfortable condition to ride over a country.

The expenses attendant upon keeping hounds do not appear to have varied greatly for many years. An alteration in the price of horse provender naturally makes some difference, but not to any great extent. There are so many little items, which a master of hounds has to provide for, which do not fluctuate. At the present period, the number of fox-hunting establishments kept up in England and Wales, according to the list at page 407, amounts to ninety-six; there may be a few more, but they are unimportant ones. To show the increase: in 1830, sixty-eight packs of hounds were compounded for; in 1850, eighty-four, according to the returns of assessed taxes. Some of these are maintained with princely magnificence at an expense not under 3500*l.* or 4000*l.* per annum. The average may be estimated at 1400*l.* a-year, which makes a total of 126,000*l.*, circulated through the medium of hounds and horses. That

is, however, a trifle compared with the expenditure of those gentlemen who compose the fields, of which it is difficult to form an estimate. The *Yorkshire Gazette* published an article last year calculating that there were one thousand hunting men in that county, keeping on an average four horses each, at a cost of 50*l.* for each horse per annum. It appears a high estimate, but Yorkshire is a great horse-breeding county, and is particularly celebrated for its sportsmen. Taking one country with another, and averaging the number of horses kept in each for the exclusive purposes of hunting, at one hundred and seventy — which from observation, and the best data I can obtain I believe to be near the mark — we have fifteen thousand three hundred horses employed in this service. According to the proportion in Yorkshire, this appears to be a very low computation; but it must be remembered that many of the two days a-week packs are not in populous countries, and many of the attendants upon them do not keep more than a single horse. Calculating the keep of each horse at 40*l.* a-year — still below the Yorkshire estimate — the aggregate amount will be 6800*l.*, which, added to 1400*l.* for the expenses of the hounds, causes an expenditure of 8200*l.* per annum, as the average allowance for the ninety packs, which is circulated in the agricultural

districts.. To this may be added a host of contingent expenses, which it would be utterly impossible to compute.

In every hunting country, and with the exception of the mining or over-populous districts, there are very few parts of England which are not hunted; the resident farmers or other persons breeding, rearing, or purchasing horses likely to make hunters, can, if kept in condition, always command remunerative prices for them, without the trouble of taking them from home. If they cannot sell them to their landlords or the gentlemen who hunt in the country, they can to the dealers, who are always on the look-out for horses of character. It is the interest of every landlord and every farmer, whether they participate in the pleasures of the chase or not, to promote it to the utmost of their ability. Well-got hay and well-harvested oats will always command a higher price in a popular hunting district than elsewhere. The farmers will sometimes say that gentlemen generally buy their oats from the dealers, which is true, but then the dealers buy them from the farmers who grow them, and there is a reason why the custom is generally most convenient to the consumer. He can have them from the dealer, who keeps a stock, in any quantity and at any time he may require them; but he can only procure them, except in a few

instances, from the farmer when it suits him to thrash. Farmers also argue that the dealers supply foreign oats; but he is a bad judge who ever gives his hunters any oats that have been shipped, even if he buys them at a reduced price.

If we impartially canvass the social and practical condition of the chase, together with all its attendant customs, advantages, and interests, we must come to the most satisfactory conclusions. Since fox-hunting has been established as a national amusement, the present facilities for participating in the soul-stirring pursuit have never been exceeded, I may justly add, equalled. Every part of England capable of affording sport is aroused in due season with the enlivening sound of horn and hound. The unfriendly prejudice which at one period existed among a few preservers of game against the foxes is almost obsolete. Experience has convinced them, that they may have game for themselves and foxes for the recreation of their friends.

It has long since been determined that a gentleman who devotes his winter mornings to fox-hunting, is not on that account an unfit companion for the drawing-room in the evening. Like all other engagements, it must be subservient to change, yet it does not follow that the changes will be prejudicial; and likewise it may be subject to those reactions which are inseparable with

most of the affairs of life. But withal there is reason to feel convinced that fox-hunting is in every respect in the ascendant, and let us express the hope that the echoing hills, in responding to the welcome chorus of hounds and horn, will long bear testimony to the grateful assurance.

THE END.

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